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The Lake English Classics

SELECTIONS

FROM

THE POEMS OF TENNYSON

WITH PARTS OF

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I. A SKETCH OF TENNYSON'S LIFE

Alfred Tennyson, the fourth of twelve children all but two of whom lived to be over seventy, was born August 6, 1809, in the rectory of Somersby, Lincolnshire. His father, the rector, was a tall, strong, energetic man, with a dominating personality. He had great ability and considerable learning, and most that the boys knew before they went to college he taught them. He was of a highly nervous temperament, a man of moods, sometimes giving way to fits of black despondency, sometimes delighting a company with his geniality and witty conversation. The poet's mother had been a great beauty and a belle in the county. She was extremely innocent and tenderhearted, yet with a strong sense of humor. "A remarkable and saintly woman," said her son, "always doing good by a sort of intuition." "I once asked him," wrote Dr. Ker, "whether his mother had not sat for the picture of the Prince's mother in *The Princess* [VII. 298-312] and he allowed that no one else had.

> 'Happy he
> With such a mother! faith in womankind
> Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
> Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
> He shall not blind his soul with clay.'"

The children in the Tennyson family grew up in a normal fashion, happy among themselves, and rejoicing in their free life in a beautiful country. They took long walks over the windy wolds and along the picturesque brooks near Somersby; they played imaginative games drawn from their knowledge of knight errantry; they carved in wood and modeled in clay; they wrote continued stories in letter form: they acted old English plays. And chief in the athletic games, the story-telling, and the acting, was Alfred. The only break in this life was when, at about seven, the child was sent to live with his grandmother at Louth that he might attend the school there. But the master was of "the tempestuous, flogging sort," and the lad was bitterly unhappy, so unhappy that in later life he "would not go down the lane where the school was."

Tennyson was very young when he began to make verses. Before he could read he was in the habit, on a stormy day, of spreading his arms to the wind and crying out, "I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind." In later life he said, "The first poetry that moved me was my own at five years old. When I was eight I remember making a line I thought grander than Campbell, or Byron, or Scott. I rolled it out, it was this: 'With slaughterous sons of thunder rolled the flood'—great nonsense, of course, but I thought it fine." At about the same time he covered two sides of a slate with Thomsonian blank verse in praise of flowers. At ten he read Pope's *Homer's Iliad*, and then wrote hundreds of lines in

the regular heroic couplet. At twelve he wrote an epic of twelve thousand lines "à la Walter Scott." Little as the lines were worth, he says he never felt more truly inspired. He would write as much as seventy lines at a time and go shouting them about the fields in the dark. At about fourteen he wrote a drama in blank verse. "From his earliest years," says his brother Arthur, "he felt that he was to be a poet, and earnestly trained himself for his vocation." Charles Tennyson, the brother next older, also wrote verse, and in 1826, when the two boys were respectively seventeen and eighteen, they brought out a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers.* Sixty years later these poems were reprinted. Tennyson had a great distaste for what he contemptuously called his "early rot," but the poems are of interest in studying his development.

Tennyson matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, February 25, 1828. The regular academic life was little to his taste. The studies were, he said, so uninteresting that none but "dry-headed, calculating, angular little gentlemen" could take much delight in them. His chief gain from the university was through the men he met there, especially through a club known as "The Apostles," of which he became a member. The young men in this club met daily in one another's rooms, and had also stated meetings for the discussion of political, religious, philosophical, and literary topics. The records of the club show the seriousness with which questions were considered. For instance, two of the

questions at one meeting were: Have Shelley's poems an immoral tendency? and, Is there any rule of moral action beyond expediency? It is characteristic of Tennyson that to the first he voted "No," to the second "Aye." Of Tennyson's friends in the university Hallam Tennyson says, "They were a genial, high-spirited, poetical set, full of speculation and of enthusiasm for the great literature of the past, and for the modern schools of thought, and despised rhetoric and sentimentalism." Among these young men Tennyson took almost at once a leading place. Fanny Kemble, who used to visit her brother John at this time, said of Tennyson, "He was our hero, the great hero of our day." A college friend describes him as "six feet high, broad-chested, strong-limbed, his face Shakespearean, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child's but of great size and strength. What struck one most about him was the union of strength and refinement." From other friends we learn that he was noted for "Johnsonian common sense, and a rare power of expression, very genial, full of enjoyment, full of sensitiveness, and full of humor; though with the passionate heart of a poet and often feeling the melancholy of life."

By far the most important element in Tennyson's college life was his friendship with Arthur Hallam, the son of the great historian. They met in 1828, and for five years there ensued a companionship of

rare delight and of rare value. All accounts agree concerning the intellectual strength, the fine taste, the personal grace and charm of Hallam. Tennyson said of him: "He was as near perfection as mortal man could be."

It was in the midst of the associations and pleasures of university life that the poems of Tennyson's first independent volume, the *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, were written. This volume was published in 1830. It shows that Tennyson had not yet found his own peculiar province in poetry, but it was, nevertheless, a most promising and significant production for a young man of twenty-one. The most favorable review was written by Arthur Hallam for the *Englishman's Magazine*, 1831. Coleridge's criticism was hardly so appreciative. He admitted "a good deal of beauty" in the poems he had seen, but added, "The misfortune is that he has begun to write verses without very well understanding what metre is."

In 1831 Tennyson left Cambridge without taking a degree. His father was in ill-health and the son was needed at home. A few weeks later his father died, but arrangements were made so that the family could still live at the rectory, and Alfred, in the absence of his older brothers, settled down as the practical head of the household. Arthur Hallam and Emily Tennyson had become engaged, so that Hallam was much at Somersby. The days passed by in a happy succession, filled to the brim with the pleasures of congenial companionship and congenial

work. The many poems written during this period were read to the home circle, and were then sent up in manuscript for the judgment of the Cambridge "Apostles." It was said that "a daily divan continued to sit through the term," and that "*The Palace of Art* was read to each man as he came up from his vacation." The "Tennysonian Rhapsodists," as they were called, learned the poems by heart, talked out of them, talked about them, and strove to win the suffrages of the unappreciative. Tennyson's second volume, which, though it appeared in December of 1832, was dated 1833, was greeted by this circle of university friends with genuine admiration. But, outside the small band of Tennysonians, criticism was generally adverse and even contemptuous. *The Quarterly*, the most influential magazine of the day, voiced this hostile attitude. Tennyson was deeply hurt. It was his temperament to forget praise and remember blame, and all adverse judgments stuck in his mind and rankled. Even more acutely conscious of his faults than were his critics, he came to the bitter conclusion that he could never write so as to please an English audience, and he almost determined to write no more. Arthur Hallam's faith in him as a poet was one of his strongest supports during this period of darkness and self-doubt. But in the very crisis of his unhappiness there came the news of Hallam's sudden death at Vienna. Emily Tennyson was ill for months. To Tennyson himself the death of his friend was an almost insupport-

able grief. "With his loss," said Tennyson, "all joy seemed blotted out from my life, and I longed for death."

Of the ten years following 1832 surprisingly little is known. The Tennysons left Somersby in 1837. Thereafter they had several homes—High Beech in Epping Forest, then Tunbridge Wells, then Boxley near Maidstone, then Cheltenham. Tennyson managed the family affairs, living sometimes at home, sometimes in lodgings in or near London. It was a period of self-discipline, self-restraint, and work. At seventeen, at twenty-one, at twenty-three, he had published poems. From his own maturing critical faculty, from the harshness of hostile reviewers, he had learned his faults, and now, in "silence, obscurity, and solitude" he set himself to perfect his art. He refused to publish. He refused to sanction the publication even of friendly and laudatory criticisms. But, finally, in 1842, the ripe result of the ten years of work appeared in two volumes entitled *Poems by Alfred Tennyson.* Many of the poems of 1830 and 1833 reappeared, but so re-written as to be hardly recognizable. The new poems dealt with a wide range of subjects, and the workmanship was of striking and sustained excellence. The victory was won. There was a chorus of praise on both sides the Atlantic. The Dean of Westminster, then a young man in college, said, "On my return to Oxford in October in 1842 his name was on every one's lip, his poems discussed, criticised, interpreted; portions of them repeatedly

set for translations in Latin and Greek verse at schools and colleges; read and re-read so habitually that there were many of us who could repeat page after page from memory." The veteran Wordsworth said of him, "He is decidedly the first of our living poets." The following letter from Carlyle must have given Tennyson singular pleasure:

"Truly it is long since in any English Book, Poetry or Prose, I have felt the pulse of a real man's heart as I do in this same. A right-valiant, true-fighting, victorious heart; strong as a lion's, yet gentle, loving, full of music; what I call a genuine singer's heart! There are tones as of the nightingale's; low murmurs as of wood-doves at summer noon; everywhere a noble sound as of the free winds and leafy woods. . . . In other words, there seems to be a note of 'The Eternal Melodies' in this man; for which let all other men be thankful and joyful."

One result of the volume of 1842 was that Tennyson was granted a royal pension of £200 a year. There was some question whether Sheridan Knowles or Tennyson should have the pension, but Lord Houghton gave Sir Robert Peel *Ulysses* to read, and that settled the matter in Tennyson's favor.

The first long poem that Tennyson wrote was *The Princess*, which appeared in 1847. It was his contribution to the discussion of "Woman's Sphere" and "Woman's Rights," topics at that time of paramount social interest. The higher education of women was not, indeed, a new theme. It had been now and then brought to public notice by

advocate or satirist during a period of at least two centuries. The "Learned Lady" as a comic type had persisted from the time of Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes* to the end of the eighteenth century. Even the specific project of a college for women had been broached and made fun of, or bitterly and coarsely satirized, as in Swift's "Madonella" papers in *The Tatler*. The advocates of higher education for women, such as Lady Winchilsea, Mary Astell, Defoe, and Steele in the early part of the eighteenth century, and, notably, Mary Wollstonecraft at the end of that century, had, however, held their own, and gradually there had been created, along very sensible and moderate lines, a public sentiment in favor of greater scholastic and social opportunities for women. But, as Mr. Wallace in his Introduction to *The Princess* points out, the general agitation concerning woman's position had at the time when *The Princess* was written reached a point of extravagance and hysterical unreason, so that Tennyson felt himself impelled to utter the warning embodied in the poem. The essence of his teaching seems to be that a woman should be well educated and free, but that her education and freedom should not be of such a sort as to unfit her for her natural place, the home. In form the poem was confused, so that its main drift was not understood till in later editions it was recast, and the emphasis on the child as the keynote of the failure of the college was reinforced by the addition of the songs. Portions of the poem are as splendid as anything Tennyson ever wrote, but taken as a

whole, its mixture of serious and comic, and the very fact that it is, as the title announces, "a m ·," are against it.

The year 1850 was the great year in Tennyson's life. In that year he brought out not only a revised edition of his *Poems* (the sixth edition), an edition of *The Princess* with the songs added (the thir' edition), but also the first edition of his great elegy the *In Memoriam*. In June of that year he wa· married to Emily Sellwood, and in November, owi· chiefly to Prince Albert's admiration for *In Meme· rium*, he was made Poet Laureate.

Some of the elegiac songs in *In Memoriam* had been written as early as 1833. Others were written at intervals during the following years, as the poet was impelled by some thought of his friend or some new view of the character and purpose of grief. There was, at first, no thought of publication, but as the songs grew in number Tennyson at last decided to weave them together into a whole. He hoped thus to present his conviction that "fear, doubt, and suffering will find answer and relief only through faith in a God of Love." From friends and critics the poem received the highest praise, and Tennyson's claims to be regarded as a great poet were put beyond question.

Tennyson's marriage was an exceedingly happy one. His love for Emily Sellwood was of long standing, dating, in fact, from the day in 1836 when he had taken her in as bridesmaid at the marriage of her younger sister to his brother Charles. But

Tennyson's finances were not then such as to justify marriage. Throughout the ten years of his voluntary apprenticeship he had lived most frugally, but with the publication of the *In Memoriam* volume and the certainty of a small yearly royalty on that and his other volumes, marriage became possible. The wedding took place at Shiplake Church, Oxfordshire, one of the most beautiful old village churches in England. The honeymoon was spent at Tent Lodge, Coniston. On the way thither they stopped at Clevedon and saw the church where Arthur Hallam was buried, and the visit seemed "a kind of consecration" of their marriage.

The first home of the Tennysons was at Chapel House, Montpelier Row, Twickenham. Here in 1852 was born Hallam Tennyson, the son whose life was afterwards so closely identified with his father's. The poet's study in this house, the Green Room, is famous as the place where he wrote the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*

In November, 1853, the Tennysons took a house at Farringford, at the extreme southwestern corner of the Isle of Wight. It was a quiet spot, not easily accessible, and for that reason peculiarly attractive to Tennyson, whose tastes and whose work made him prefer a secluded home. But the primary charm of the place was its beautiful situation. Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson visited the house first on a November day, and when they saw from the drawing-room windows "a sea of Mediterranean blue, with rosy capes beyond, the down on the left rising above

the foreground of undulating park, golden-leaved elms, and chestnuts, and red-stemmed pines, they agreed that they must, if possible, have that view to live with." Here the second son, Lionel, was born in 1854.

The first important poem written here was *Maud* (1855). This is one of the most beautiful of Tennyson's longer poems, but the eulogy of war as the means whereby the hero is to be restored to manliness, and the nation to be rescued from commercialism, roused such a storm of hostile criticism that it was long before the perfection of the purely lyrical portions of the poem received due praise. Henry Taylor, Mr. Jowett, and the Brownings were, says Hallam Tennyson, the only ones who spoke out at once in favor of the poem. Mr. Mann, a little later in the same year, wrote *Maud Vindicated*, a commentary welcomed by Tennyson as both true and full. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Van Dyke were among the critics who were at first adverse but who were won over by hearing Tennyson read the poem, and who afterwards "publicly recanted" their early criticism. In spite of the reviewers the poem was apparently popular, for it was through the sale of this volume that Tennyson was enabled to buy Farringford in 1856.

As Tennyson became famous, and as the neighboring village of Freshwater changed from a hamlet to a summer resort, the insistent curiosity of tourists made his life a burden to him. So, finally, Green Hill, an estate in Sussex, but close to the Surrey

line, was bought, and here in 1867 a new and stately home was built. The place was named Aldworth. The cornerstone of the new house was laid with simple ceremonies on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23. The inscription on the stone was, "Prosper thou the work of our hands, O prosper thou our handiwork." After the completion of this house it was the custom of the Tennysons to go there every June, returning to Farringford in October or November. The time between the Christmas and the Easter holidays was often spent in London.

Tennyson's life at Farringford and Aldworth was one of exceptional happiness. The motto chosen for a new sundial at Aldworth, *Horas non numero nisi serenas*, describes well most of the thirty-nine years spent in these two beautiful homes. Tennyson's poems brought in an adequate and constantly growing income, and the domestic life was of the happiest and most stimulating sort. Of Mrs. Tennyson, her son Hallam said:

"It was she who became my father's adviser in literary matters. 'I am proud of her intellect,' he wrote. With her he always discussed what he was working at; she transcribed his poems; to her and to no one else he referred for a final criticism before publishing. She, with her 'tender, spiritual nature,' and instinctive nobility of thought, was always by his side, a ready, courageous, wise and sympathetic counsellor . . . and to her he wrote two of the most beautiful of his shorter lyrics, 'Dear, near and

true,' and the dedicatory lines which prefaced his last volume, *The Death of Oenone.*"

Tennyson was fond of children, and he early made his two boys his companions. He played games with them, took them on long walks, read to them, and taught them how to observe. "Make the lives of children as happy and beautiful as possible," was his maxim. The two virtues he insisted on were truthfulness and courtesy.

Tennyson was extremely hospitable and entertained largely. A Tennyson guest-book for the years in Farringford and Aldworth would contain a long list of famous names, but even this would give but an imperfect impression of the wide and varied social circle the Tennysons gathered about them Tennyson apparently enjoyed this sort of social intercourse as much as he disliked the mere curious tourist. Two years before his death Mrs. Tennyson wrote that he had been entertaining large five o'clock tea parties almost daily for weeks.

A feature of all social gatherings was Tennyson's reading aloud. *Maud* and the dialect poems were those which he preferred to read. Mrs. Ritchie describes his voice as "capable of delicate and manifold inflections, but with organ notes of great power and range." So effective was his reading of *Maud*, with its complexity of emotion, its rapid movement and quick transition of mood, as to justify the statement that had he not been a great poet he might have been a great actor.

Tennyson's shyness and "morbidity" in general or

strange society was not at all apparent when he was host. "In the domestic circle," says Mrs. Ritchie, "he talked freely and brightly." Mr. Lecky and Mr. Palgrave comment on his delight in witty stories, and on his wonderful flow and fertility in anecdote. Many of Tennyson's friends remark on his keen sense of the humorous. "His humor is of the dryest. It is admirable," says Mr. Locker-Lampson, "and he tells a story excellently and has a catching laugh—an entirely natural and a very kindly laugh." When with a person whose intellect stimulated his own and with whom he felt perfectly at home, Tennyson was at his social best. When Mr. Browning came to dinner and there were no other guests, Hallam Tennyson says the talk was the best he had ever heard, but too rapid and varied and brilliant even to attempt to reproduce.

But social life, however delightful, was never allowed to interfere with Tennyson's work. At the beginning of his ten solitary years of apprenticeship he laid out for himself a steady and heavy course of reading, and through his life he kept up the habits thus formed. The books that he read would, if listed, make a library as remarkable for its size as for its variety. He kept himself informed on new discoveries and theories in Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, and Geology. He studied all sorts of books that could make him more intelligently familiar with the facts of nature He kept up his Greek and Latin. He read widely in French, German, and Italian poetry. On a tour to Italy he

took with him, says his son, "his usual travelling companions, Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Pindar, Theocritus, and probably the *Divina Commedia* and Goethe's *Gedichte*." He was well-read in English poetry, both old and contemporary. And he was an incessant novel reader. As a result, perhaps, of reading so catholic in scope, his literary judgments were, as Mr. Lecky says, "singularly sane and unexaggerated." His strongest admiration was always for Shakespeare, whom he knew so well that he believed himself able to detect spurious passages by instinct. Of the intellectual process necessary to produce Shakespeare's plays he said he could not even form an apprehension, "the intellectual genius of Shakespeare and the religious genius of Jesus Christ being beyond the intelligence of man." A very interesting list of Tennyson's literary appreciations might be gathered from the *Memoir*, his experience with Byron being especially worthy of note. At fourteen he was an "enormous admirer" of Byron. At seventeen he put his lordship away and could never thereafter even give him his due. But on the whole we find Tennyson voicing opinions in nowise new or startling, open-minded to various sorts of excellence, independent, cool, and judicial in tone, without fads or whimsicalities of taste, not carried off his feet by any "blind hysterics of the Celt."

Happy domestic and social life, delightful holiday tours, the study of nature, books, and men, were all but the setting for Tennyson's lifework, which was

the writing of poems; and the composition of these poems, their publication, and their reception by readers and critics were the center of interest in the life at Farringford and Aldworth. After *Maud* in 1855 followed four years of work devoted in the main to *The Idylls of the King*, four of which came out in 1859. *Enoch Arden* was published in 1864, *The Holy Grail* in 1870, *The Last Tournament* in 1871, *Gareth and Lynette* in 1872.

The dramas came between 1875 and 1892. It is remarkable that at sixty-six years of age Tennyson should have undertaken a new kind of writing. His first drama was one of a proposed trilogy of historical plays representative of periods that would complete the line of Shakespeare's English chronicle-plays. In the order of publication these plays are *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876, but dated 1877), and *Becket* (1884). Of these Tennyson cared most for *Queen Mary*. The character of Mary strongly interested him and he thought there was not in all history anything more affecting than the final tragedy of her life. But readers and audiences unite in counting *Becket* the greatest of Tennyson's plays. J. R. Green said that all his researches into the annals of the twelfth century had not given him so vivid a conception of the character of Henry II. and his court as was embodied in this play. As a stage tragedy, Irving said he considered it one of the three most successful plays produced by him at the Lyceum.

Besides the historical plays, Tennyson wrote four dramas that met with varying fortunes. *The*

Promise of May (acted 1882), an attempt to write "a modern village tragedy," met with open hostility because in the character of the hero Tennyson was thought to give an intentional caricature of Free Thought and Socialism. *The Falcon* was brought out by the Kembles in 1879. *The Cup*, magnificently staged by Irving and Terry in 1881, had a long run. *The Foresters*, with music by Sir Arthur Sullivan, costumes fashioned after old designs in the British Museum, and scenes copied from Whymper's beautiful pictures of Sherwood Forest, was produced in New York in 1892 by Augustin Daly with Ada Rehan as a most successful Maid Marian.

Throughout the whole period from 1850 there were also many minor publications, and numerous new editions of poems in revised form. Tennyson's literary activity lasted with almost unimpaired originality and vigor till the last year of his long life. Probably from 1842, certainly from 1850, his place as the first of living English poets was unquestioned. With the appearance of *The Holy Grail* volume his fame reached its highest point. Ten thousand copies were sold in the first week after publication, and fine reviews appeared in the *Spectator*, *Edinburgh*, and *Quarterly*. The drop of bitter in Tennyson's full cup of praise was the denunciatory criticism awakened by *Maud*, which he himself regarded as one of his greatest poems. Of the honors that came to Tennyson after 1850 the most distinguished were the D. C. L. degree conferred upon him by Oxford in 1855, and the peerage conferred upon him by the Queen in 1884.

From his youth up Tennyson had exceptional physical vigor. Even at eighty-two he showed endurance and agility beyond that of much younger men. His death, which occurred in his eighty-fourth year, was exceedingly peaceful and after but a brief illness. On the following morning Dr. Dabbs published a medical bulletin in which he said:

"On Thursday, October 6th, 1:35 A. M., the great poet breathed his last. Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours. On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming in through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end."

To this account Hallam Tennyson adds:

"We placed *Cymbeline* with him, and a laurel wreath from Virgil's tomb and wreaths of roses, the flower which he loved above all flowers, and some of his Alexandrian laurel, the poet's laurel. On the evening of the 11th the coffin was set upon our wagonette, made beautiful with stag's-horn moss and the scarlet Lobelia Cardinalis; and draped with the pall, woven by working men and women of the north and embroidered by the cottagers of Keswick; and then we covered him with the wreaths and crosses of flowers sent from all parts of Great Britain. The coachman who had been for more than thirty years my father's faithful servant led the horse.

"Ourselves, the villagers, and the school children

followed over the moor through our lane towards a glorious sunset, and later through Haslemere under brilliant starlight. On the 12th Tennyson was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was laid next to Robert Browning and in front of the Chaucer monument. The funeral service was simple but majestic. The music was 'Crossing the Bar,' set by Dr. Bridge, and 'Silent Voices,' a melody in F minor, set by Mrs. Tennyson at her husband's express request. While waiting for the service many in the vast silent audience were seen reading *In Memoriam*."

No words can more fitly close the life of Tennyson than those lines quoted by Hallam Tennyson from *The Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*.

"On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him."

II. TENNYSON AS A POET OF NATURE

Not even the casual reader of Tennyson's poems can fail to be struck by his varied, minute and accurate knowledge of the world about him, by his

unfailing delight in nature, and by the remarkable finish and beauty of his descriptions. For comment these three points may be conveniently considered together, and they could be abundantly illustrated from almost any part of Tennyson's poetry of nature. Take, for instance, his studies of little streams, as notably in *The Brook*. Every portion of the stream seems to be of interest to him. He describes the cresses or withered leaves or bright pebbles in its bed. He has all kinds of apt words for the movement of the water, for its sound, for its sparkle and gleam. All the details of the banks, their curves or sharp turns, their variations in height, color, and foliage, are clearly given. The following brief similes descriptive of two ways in which the water of a brook meets an impediment would of themselves mark Tennyson as a poet of close observation and with a gift for simple yet adequate phrasing:

> "As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
> Running too vehemently to break upon it."
> *Marriage of Geraint.*

> "a brook
> With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
> Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave."
> *The Holy Grail.*

Even better illustrations would come from his descriptions of the ocean. "Water is the element I love best of all the four," said he, and this preference is amply proved not only by his frequent lines on inland waters, but especially by his many fine passages on the ocean. From his earliest years he

is said to have had a passion for the sea. He wrote once to Mrs. Howitt: "There was no more *sea*, says St. John in Revelation. . . . I remember reading that when a child, and not being able to reconcile myself to a future where there should be no more sea." All through his life Tennyson loved and studied shores and bays and crags and waves. In 1848 he wrote of a proposed sojourn at Bude: "I hear that there are larger waves there than on any other part of the British coast, and must go thither and be alone with God." When he reached Bude at night he exclaimed, "Where is the sea? Show me the sea!" and hurried out with such impetuosity that he fell, he says, "sheer down, upward of six feet, over wall on fanged cobbles." But he was immediately up and away over the dark hill to the shore. Many passages might be quoted to show how fully this enthusiasm for the ocean is reflected in his poetry. There are pictures rich in color, as,

> "Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
> Play'd into green."
>
> *Geraint and Enid.*

> "By bays, the peacock's neck in hue."
>
> *The Daisy.*

> "The liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
> The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land."
>
> *Maud.*

There is occasionally a picture of utter gentleness, like that in the first part of *The Lotos-Eaters*. More often there are descriptions of the ocean in wild weather. The German Ocean in a storm was Tennyson's especial delight, and his characteristic

ocean poetry is of a "dim sea vext with scudding drifts," or of "angry waves on an iron coast." The emphasis is nowhere on "tender curving lines of creamy spray," but on "ocean ridges roaring into cataracts," or "breakers that boom and blanch on precipices." Of the accuracy of his ocean pictures, even of the briefest and most casual ones, we have interesting confirmation from men competent to speak. Tyndall was one day sitting on the beach at Freshwater and listening to the grinding noise made by the innumerable sharp collisions of flint pebbles rolled back and forth by the waves. As an apt description of the sound he quoted the following line from *Maud:*

"Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave."

and Hallam Tennyson says that this line was actually written about this very beach.

Or take this comment of Mr. Swinburne on the line in *The Marriage of Geraint:*

"And white sails flying on the yellow sea."

"I could not but feel conscious," says Mr. Swinburne, "at once of its charm and of the equally certain fact that I, though cradled and reared by the sea, had never seen anything like that. But on the first bright day I ever spent on the eastern coast of England I saw the truth of this touch at once, and recognized once more with admiring delight the subtle and sure fidelity of that happy and studious hand. There, on the dull, yellow, foamless floor of dense discolored sea, so thick with clotted sand that

the water looked massive and solid as the shore, the white sails flashed whiter against it and along it as they fled; and I knew once more the truth of what I never had doubted—that the eye and hand of Tennyson may always be trusted, at once and alike, to see and to express the truth."

In nearly all realms of nature Tennyson was equally exact in his facts and felicitous in his phrase. Trees he knew as few poets have done. He pictures the age, the size, the stubborn endurance, the lion-like force of the oak. He runs through the cycle of the life of the chestnut from the winter buds to the fall of the shining nuts. The deep-red buds of the lime, its nectar-laden blossoms, bee-haunted, its mass of foliage, are perfectly described. One of the most charming passages in *Cranford* is the comment of old Mr. Holbrook on the surprisingly accurate description in these two lines:

"More black than ashbuds in the front of March."

"A cedar spreads his dark green layers of shade."

"Capital term—'layers'! Wonderful man!" said Mr. Holbrook, and the old gentleman then berated himself in fine shape for not knowing that ashbuds are black in March. "And I've lived all my life in the country; more shame for me not to know. Black: they are jet black, madam."

Tennyson's studies of animal life are hardly less interesting than those of inanimate nature. This is especially true of his descriptions of birds. For concentration and strength few passages in his poems

can surpass his lines on the eagle. He gives charming studies of birds in some characteristic attitude or occupation, as in the little sketch of the three gray linnets wrangling on a thistle in *Guinevere* (l. 252) or of the disconsolate robin in an autumn storm in *Enoch Arden* (l. 672). There are also effective passages in which many familiar birds, presented in a phrase or two, combine to give the general spirit of a scene, as in the description of the brilliant day in May in *The Gardener's Daughter*, or in the more complex use of bird flight and bird song to present the joyous life of the opening year in *The Progress of Spring*. Better still are those passages in which, without any attempt to be descriptive, Tennyson gives a lyrical reproduction of the musical and spiritual qualities of the song, as notably in *The Throstle*.

The foregoing illustrations are taken almost at random from a mass of material equally indicative of fine observation and felicitous phrasing. They seem meager enough, but are perhaps sufficient to suggest Tennyson's high rank as a descriptive poet of nature.

It remains to speak of Tennyson's way of using nature in close connection with man. His poems are rich in metaphors and similes drawn from nature, and these figures are marked not only by his customary fidelity to the fact and charm of phrase, but also by a subtle harmony between the figure and the human mood or experience to be illustrated. It is surprising to discover how large a proportion of

Tennyson's best brief descriptions occur in these similitudes. He apparently sees nature most sympathetically when he sees in it some human analogy.

Of description of nature dissociated from man, such description as we have, for instance, in Wordsworth's *Yew Trees*, there are almost no examples in Tennyson. His landscapes are definitely intended as a setting for human beings, and his especial effort is to secure congruity between subject and scene. Frequently the same landscape is presented at different seasons to accompany different phases of experience. The contrast between the Lady of Shalott weaving her gay web and singing her clear song in Camelot, and the lady after she has seen "her own mischance," is not more striking than the contrast between the brilliant summer weather and the autumn rains of the two portions of the poem. *Mariana in the Moated Grange* is admirable as an example of nature used not only as an appropriate background, but actually fused with the human experience. Take but one detail of the scene, the solitary tree. This poplar, shadowy, restless, vexed by the winds, making its moan, is but the analogue of the maiden herself. And the tree by color and motion and sound spoke to Mariana and was a part of her spiritual experience. An interesting contrast might be made with the chestnut trees in *The Miller's Daughter*. Their wealth of bloom, breadth of shade, their fruitfulness, exactly accord with the beauty, comfort, and settled bliss of this domestic idyll.

The poems just cited are from Tennyson's early work, but poems from any period of his literary activity would show a similar delight in a close harmony between the human experience and its landscape setting. One example from the later poems will suffice. Tennyson himself calls attention to the unity given to the *Idylls* by the fact that they follow the round of the seasons. *The Coming of Arthur* is on the night of the New Year. *Gareth and Lynette*, the story of youthful goodness, courage, endurance, and victory, is laid in the springtime. The following autumn-tide and the withered leaf mark the tone of the sad pageant in *The Last Tournament*. In *Guinevere* the white mist covering the full moon is symbolical of the story it introduces. When Arthur leaves Guinevere he disappears enwound fold by fold in the vapor, and passes ghost-like to his doom. In *The Passing of Arthur* the union of man and nature is so close that they can not be thought of separately. The clouds, the wandering wind, the moonlit haze among the hills, the shrilling of the ghost, the cries as from some lonely city, are alike mystical, non-human. This mysterious calling of nature and the spirit world are the fit prelude for the strange story of the king's death. The battle itself was fought on the last day of the year, in a mist that confounded friend with foe. But at twilight a bitter wind from the north cleared away the mist, and the final scene of Arthur's life took place under a full, unclouded moon that flooded the winter world with radiance. The note

of hope is given by the dawn of the new sun of the new year.

Sometimes the desire for congruity is pushed so far in Tennyson's poems as to interfere with the actuality of the scene. This is true in what Mr. Stopford Brooke calls the invented landscape, that is, a landscape the details of which, separately true, have never been seen in the combination indicated. Such landscapes are art products. The theme, the motif, rules the selection of every detail. It is an interesting kind of work and Tennyson early tried his hand at it. The *Lotos-Eaters* is a fine example. All the details contribute to the impression of languor. In the story, as Homer gives it, there is none of this description. Tennyson has created a landscape the purpose of which is to objectify the longing of the mariners for rest on a quiet shore. The stress and turbulence of the ocean, the hatefulness of the dark-blue sea, are in the background of the memory merely to emphasize the luxurious repose of the present. In *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* there was no need of exact geographical knowledge of the River Tigris. Moonlight and starlight, the darkness alive with sparkle and shimmer, the dim, rich outlines, the coolness and silence, the oriental trees and flowers, the penetrating odors, the magical song of the nightingale, are not to be combined into a real landscape. Their purpose is to create a mood, to prepare the imagination for the good Haroun Al Raschid.

Tennyson is, of course, not alone in making land-

scapes that are confessedly art products. Shelley's *Alastor* and *The Sensitive Plant* admirably illustrate the same tendency to let the theme create the setting. These landscapes, as the examples cited show, have their own peculiar charm, but it must be admitted that it is not the highest possible charm. The art, the workmanship, the deft adjustment of scene to the subject, are somewhat too apparent. A more natural and simple union of man and nature is more convincing. Such landscapes would, for instance, be quite alien to the methods of stricter realists like Wordsworth and Browning. Yet the apparently casual descriptive touches in poems such as Wordsworth's *Michael* or Browning's *By the Fireside* not only give scenes sharply individualized as scenes, but they are more vitally in harmony with the human elements of the poems than any landscapes constructed for the purpose could possibly be.

A comparison of Tennyson with other poets of nature almost surely results in a reëstablished belief that Wordsworth, at least, has more surely gone to the heart of the matter, has given us a more penetrating and inspiring interpretation of the world about us, and has indicated a more vital union of man and nature. Yet we may justly say that Tennyson's poems through the breadth and accuracy of his knowledge, through his exquisiteness of phrase and picture, through his artistic use of nature in intimate relation to human experience, offer delights of a rare and abiding sort.

III. TENNYSON AS A STUDENT OF HUMAN NATURE

Tennyson's poems present an unusually wide range of characters drawn from English farm or village life. Hallam Tennyson writes of his father: "He said that, excepting the poems suggested by simple, old-world, classical subjects, he had mostly drawn his scenes in England, because he could not truly portray the atmosphere of foreign lands." He began his studies of everyday life in *The May Queen* and *The Miller's Daughter* in 1833. In the volume of 1842 were two more domestic idylls, *Dora* and *The Gardener's Daughter*. It was, however, the poems in the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864 that gained for Tennyson the appellation, "Poet of the People." Other poems of common life appeared in successive publications, some of the most vigorous studies being in the latest volumes. These poems fall naturally into two classes, humorous studies and pathetic or tragic studies.

The Northern Farmer, Old Style (1864), the first of the humorous dialect poems, was a surprise. Nothing in Tennyson's work had indicated a gift for verse smacking so heartily of the soil. Robert Browning wrote: "'Enoch' continues the perfect thing I thought it at first reading; but the 'Farmer,' taking me unawares, astonished me more at this stage of acquaintanceship." This poem had many worthy successors. *The Northern Farmer, New Style* (1869), *The Northern Cobbler* and *The Village Wife* (1880), *The Spinster's Sweet-Arts* (1885), *Owd Roä* (1889), and *The Church Warden and the Curate* (1892) make

up the list. His material came from all sorts of sources. *The Village Wife*, a shrewd study of a vain, ignorant, backbiting old gossip, was drawn from a woman he knew in Lincolnshire. *The Northern Cobbler* and *Owd Roä* were founded on stories he had read. Of the "Northern Farmers," old and new style, Tennyson says, "The first is founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff as reported to me by a great-uncle of mine when verging upon 80—'God A'mighty little knows what He's about a-taking me. An' Squire will be so mad an' all.' I conjectured the man from that one saying. . . . 'The Farmer, new style,' is likewise founded on a single sentence, 'When I canters my 'erse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears proputty, proputty, proputty.' I had been told a rich farmer in our neighborhood was in the habit of saying this. I never saw the man, and know no more of him. It was also reported of the wife of this worthy that, when she entered the *salle à manger* of a sea-bathing place, she slapt her pockets and said, 'When I married I brought him £5,000 on each shoulder.' " So true are these stories in dialect and feeling that when they were first read in Lincolnshire a farmer's daughter said, "That's Lincoln's labourers' talk and I thought Mr. Tennyson was a gentleman." Of all these poems perhaps the first is the most striking. This picture of the rough, coarse, thick-headed farm-bailiff with his unformed conceptions of "God-amoighty," his contemptuous estimate of the Parson and the Doctor, his tremendously real sense of duty

to the "Squoire, and the land," his hatred of innovation, his immorality, his vanity, his stubbornness, is the most strongly marked and dramatically real of Tennyson's character studies. In effective contrast to the grim humor of this unashamed soliloquy, is the shrewd worldly-mindedness of the new style Farmer, whose creed is expressed in the line:

"Proputty, proputty sticks, and proputty, proputty graws."

Portions of *The Northern Cobbler* are charming, especially the lines about Sally, "sa pratty an' neät an' sweät." The Spinster's self-congratulatory review of the offers she has refused is a delightfully genial and humorous study. The last of these dialect poems, the one in which the churchwarden gives the new curate advice as to the best way to rise in the world, is keen, shrewd, sarcastic, and is hardly behind the first "Farmer" in the vigor and skill with which the character is portrayed.

More numerous are studies of tragic or pathetic import. The longest of these poems is the story of *Enoch Arden*, who is, up to the time of his exile, a rough sailor subject to the labors and the privations, and sharing the ambitions, natural to his class. But the emphasis of the poem is on the inner rather than on the outer history of Enoch's life. Wordsworth had led the way in revealing the dignity and nobility inherent in men of obscure and humble life, but even he never created a character more perfectly illustrative of the lines in Tennyson's second *Locksley Hall:*

'Plowmen, shepherds, have I found, and more than once
and still could find,
Sons of God and kings of men, in utter nobleness of
mind."

The sweet homeliness and truth of the first part of *Enoch Arden*, the tragic conflict, the dignity of self-control and self-abnegation in the second part, gave the poem a wide popular appeal.

That in a theoretical or abstract way Tennyson was neither ignorant nor unmindful of the seamy side of life, is shown by his scornful arraignment in the second *Locksley Hall* of a society that can boast of "Progress in Science and Invention" and rest unmindful of the "glooming alleys" of the city slum where "Progress halts on palsied feet," where "the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor," where "children blacken soul and sense," where the "haggard sempstress" is scrimped of her daily bread, but he has no characters drawn from realms so sordid. In most of his serious studies drawn from humble life the people seem to be fairly well to do. Or, at least, the tragedy or pathos of their lives does not come from poverty or its concomitants. But these characters cover a wide range of personalities, and very many phases of life. *Emmie*, a picture drawn from real life, describes a lonely, timid little girl in a great hospital. Of great power is the poem *Rizpah*, also based on real life. It is a story of mother-love, which, violently thwarted, yet persists in half-mad intensity till death. Of a different tone is *The Grandmother*, a description of an aged mother who has known the

"sorrow and shine of life, the flower and the thorn," and who has outlived her husband and most of her children, but who dwells so in memory and the thought of the life to come that the news of the death of her eldest son can hardly make her weep. Mrs. Greville says of Carlyle, to whom some one read this poem in 1889, "The *truth* of 'The Grandmother' *quite* upset him—he kept saying, 'Poor old body! Poor old body! And did Alfred write that! Well, I didn't know it.'"

Young women, country born and bred, form a distinct class among Tennyson's characters. *Dora* is the story of a "nobly simple country girl," said Tennyson, "and so had to be written in the simplest possible style." Of this poem Wordsworth said, "Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your 'Dora' and have not succeeded." Tennyson has no other poem so perfectly bare, straightforward, and unadorned as this one. In grief and self-abnegation Dora is the counterpart of Enoch Arden, but all the tragic results of the obstinate tyranny of the old farmer, her guardian, are told with a stern Hebraic reticence. In striking contrast to *Dora* is *The Gardener's Daughter*. All the poet's resources in the way of rich description are lavished on this poem. All possible Maytime joys crowd upon the senses. There is an ecstasy of birdsong, the winds are full-fed with perfumes. Dewy-fresh fields, a broad stream with its lazy lilies, embowering trees, lilac-shadowed paths, a garden set in blossoming squares, are described with lovely elabora-

tion of detail to make the appropriate setting for this "Rose among roses." In personal appearance, temperament, and life history Dora and Rose are at opposite ends of the scale, and Rose is certainly more Tennysonian than Dora. Alice, the daughter of the wealthy miller, and Katie Willows, the daughter of garrulous farmer Philip, are girls of the type of Rose. There are no complexities, no subtleties, no problems, in their natures or lives. They are represented as fresh, beautiful young girls, simple-hearted, refined, and gentle, with sweet, shy ways, but with quiet dignity, self-respect, and courage. They are given happy love stories and we are told that their sweet girlhood blossoms into a womanhood of comfort and blessing. Throughout these love stories of the village two qualities are apparent. One is the idealization of the village maidens. Except the wife of Enoch Arden, and perhaps Dora, these daughters of the miller, the gardener, and the farmer have ladylike delicacies and refinements, that from the beginning fit them for the mansion rather than for their own homes; and happily they all marry into a sphere much higher than that into which they were born. The second quality is a certain undue elaboration of emotion on the part of the lovers, a subjugation to feeling and a luxuriating in it that come perilously near to sentimentality.

The characters already cited show with what promptness and insight Tennyson seized upon literary material in the life about him. But many of his characters are the outcome of his wide and

varied reading. *The Lotos-Eaters*, *Oenone*, *Tiresias*, *Tithonus*, *Lucretius*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *The Cup*, are from Greek and Latin stories. *Ulysses* is from Dante, *The Golden Supper* from Boccaccio, *The Voyage of Maeldune* from Joyce's *Old English Romances*. Most of the *Idylls of the King* are from Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*. *The Dream of Fair Women* was meant as a companion to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, and the individual women, Helen of Troy, Iphigenia, Cleopatra, Jephthah's Daughter, Fair Rosamond and Joan of Arc, are all based on well-known literary sources. More recent literature was also drawn upon. *Columbus* came from Irving's *Life of Columbus*, and *Dora* was suggested by "Dora Creswell" in Miss Mitford's *Our Village*. Tennyson's use of literary material is of great interest. He condenses or expands; he adds, or rejects, or changes details at will; and he makes old stories vehicles for modern thought or morality. It is a delightful and instructive study to track some of his poems back to their confessed originals. *Dora* and *Dora Creswell*, *Ulysses* and Dante's *Inferno* XXVI, 90-129, and *The Lotos-Eaters* and *Odyssey* IX, 82 seq., would be interesting and available topics for comparison. Mr. Churton Collins thinks the framework for *Enoch Arden* was suggested by Adelaide Procter's *Homeward Bound* in her *Legends and Lyrics*, but Tennyson said he had never seen Miss Procter's poem. But if Tennyson had used it as his source, a comparison of the two would be one sure

way of making his genius apparent. It is, in fact, true that an intimate knowledge of the original almost always results in a higher estimate of Tennyson as a poet. Either he shows himself capable of writing poems that will stand comparison with great originals on the same themes, or he shows himself capable of taking a hint or a plan from feeble work and expanding it in rich and splendid form.

IV. LEADING IDEAS IN TENNYSON'S POEMS

Tennyson's long period of literary activity (1830-1892) was synchronous with social, political, religious, and literary movements so complex and diverse that it becomes almost impossible to analyze or classify them in brief space, and still more difficult to indicate his relation to each of them. Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth can be more easily "placed" in their respective periods than can Tennyson in his. Even if we should confine our attention entirely to literature it would be difficult to comprehend in one statement a period inclusive of Coleridge and Kipling. It needs a moment's reflection to realize how far back the beginning of Tennyson's work reaches. Keats, Shelley, and Byron, to be sure, died while he was a boy, but Crabbe and Scott might have seen his 1830 volume, and the 1833 volume came out a year before the death of Lamb and of Coleridge. Tennyson is said to have been a great reader of novels, and his contemporaries certainly offered him abundant opportunities for indulging this habit. He might, had he been so minded, have read, as they came

from the press, the later novels of Scott, the nautical tales of Marryat, the Irish novels of Lever, all the works of Dickens, Thackeray, Charles Reade, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, George Meredith, Anthony Trollope, Charles Kingsley, Wilkie Collins, and a fair proportion of the works of Thomas Hardy, W. D. Howells, Henry James, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Poetry was hardly less voluminous, though it offers fewer names of equal distinction. Tennyson's literary career includes the period in which appeared the entire work of the Brownings, Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, Edward Fitzgerald, William Morris, the Rossettis, and Swinburne, and the earlier work of the men of the present generation. In essay, social study, or history we go down the list from Lamb and De Quincey through Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Spencer, Mill, Froude, and Lecky. In science the great books were Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871), and Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* (begun in 1862).

Tennyson was ten years older than Queen Victoria, who came to the throne in 1837, when he was twenty-eight years old. In the chief events of her reign he was always deeply interested. Two great steps towards freedom, the outcome of previous agitation, occurred before her accession to the throne. They were the passage of the bill for Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and the final bill for the Abolition of Slavery in 1833. Another important movement begun before 1837 was the attempt to secure electoral

reform. By the three bills of 1832, 1867-8, and 1884-5, power passed gradually from holders of great estates to the hands of the people. The work of the Chartists from 1838 to 1849, the work of the Anti-Corn-Law League culminating under the ministry of Sir Robert Peel in 1846, the ever recurring question of the best government for Ireland, England's various foreign wars, especially the Crimean War in 1854-6—all of these are but salient features of a complex life the elements of which combined and recombined in many forms between 1830 and 1892.

The fact that Tennyson was never indifferent to the questions of the day, and in prose and poetry gave utterance to his views on a vast number of topics, makes it impossible to do more in a brief survey than to indicate some of the ideas on which he placed most emphasis.

Tennyson wrote many poems on political or patriotic themes, but with one or two exceptions they are not his best work. His steady conservatism, his respect for law and order, may be safe to live by, but they are not inspiring poetical themes. He is, to be sure, in favor of freedom and of progress, but it is a regulated freedom, a progress by slow degrees. He praises England as the land where "a man may speak the thing he will," and he is republican enough to demand that the throne shall be "broad-based upon the people's will," but he has a dread of too much oratory and but slight confidence in the people at large—

> "wild heart and feeble wings
> That every sophister can lime."

He constantly deprecates "raw haste." There must be change, but it should come "nor swift, nor slow." Each new thought should "ingroove itself" with the thought it displaces. He loves "the storied past," the "wisdom of a thousand years," ideas "by degrees to fulness wrought," a settled government where freedom "broadens slowly down from precedent to precedent." "Be not precipitate in thine act of steering," is his advice to the statesman. No political topic taken up by Tennyson has occasioned more controversy than his attitude towards war. Certainly in *Maud* war is made the cure for hysterical passion on the part of the individual and sordid commercialism on the part of the nation. Nor can the flaming eulogy of "the blood-red blossom of war" be set aside as merely a dramatic utterance of his hero. It is a better defense to say that Tennyson praises war only as the lesser of two evils. He praises it in contrast to "a peace full of wrongs and shames, horrible, hateful, monstrous." In a later poem he presents peace as the ideal. In the epilogue to *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade* he says,

> "And who loves war for war's own sake
> Is fool, or crazed, or worse,"

And again in the same poem,

> "I would that wars should cease,
> I would the globe from end to end
> Might sow and reap in peace."

Tennyson's greatest patriotic poems are those that leave the theory of statecraft and celebrate some

English hero. The splendid swinging rhythm of *The Revenge* and the noble commemoration of Wellington and incidentally of Nelson in the *Ode on the Death of Wellington* show to what heights he could rise when love of England and pride in heroic deeds of Englishmen were his inspiration.

A marked characteristic of Tennyson's poetry is its recognition of the scientific thought of the day. It had long been a sort of literary convention to gibe at science as the enemy of the imagination and so of literature. Some of the cleverest flings in Dryden and in Pope have to do with the "virtuosi" of their respective periods. Even Wordsworth has some contemptuous lines on the "wandering herbalist" and the self-complacent astronomer who flattered himself that he could weigh the heavens in the hollow of his hands. But in another passage Wordsworth describes poetry as "the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science," and prophesies that the day will come when the remotest facts of science will be so a part of common consciousness as to enter naturally into poetry. To a certain degree Tennyson realized this prophecy. Especially was this true in astronomy. The work of the elder Herschel belongs in the years 1773-1822, and his discoveries deeply affected Tennyson even as a child. When he was a boy an elder brother expressed some shyness at the thought of an approaching dinner party. "Oh," said Alfred, "think of Herschel's great star patches and you will soon get over all that." And throughout his life

the facts of astronomy especially stirred his imagination.

"And the suns of the limitless universe sparkled and shone in the sky."

"While the silent Heavens roll, and suns along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day."

"Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like swarms
Of suns, and starry streams."

are typical lines. It is worthy of note also that he almost always speaks of stars by their names, as in this evening picture in *Maud:*

"When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west."

The discovery of starlight in interstellar spaces, the idea of an all-pervading luminiferous ether, greatly excited him. But he studied with almost equal enthusiasm the great facts of chemistry, geology, botany, whatever, indeed, seemed to reveal the mysteries and the laws of the universe. The doctrine of evolution he of course accepted, although he always insisted that "the Darwinians exaggerated Darwinism." His poetical reference to evolution in *In Memoriam* CXVIII, ends in a bit of didacticism:

"Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die,"

a lesson nobly expanded later in *The Evolutionist.*

From the beginning to the end of his work as a poet Tennyson concerned himself with questions

relating to the conduct of life. "Art for art's sake" was a watchword that aroused his utmost indignation. Wordsworth had said, "I wish to be regarded as a teacher or as nothing," and Tennyson, in spite of his almost undue attention to questions of form, had at the foundation a similar ethical impulse. The early poems, *The Poet* and *The Poet's Mind*, show his conception of the poet as one whose inspiration is a "song of undying love" drawn from heaven itself, whose dower is an impassioned "love of love" and a deep knowledge of the mind of man and the will of God, whose search is for wisdom, and whose mission is to fling abroad the winged shafts of truth. We should, then, expect to find in Tennyson many poems of ethical, religious, or political import.

In the brief space here at command only a few of the poems on religious themes can be spoken of. One important series has to do with the question of immortality. The *Two Voices*, a discussion of the question "Is life worth living?" was born out of the mood of despair following Arthur Hallam's death. The negative voice would have the best of the argument were it not for the poet's belief in immortality, a belief based not on argument, but on "a heat of inward evidence," a mysterious premonition of Eternity, a hint of perfection beyond imperfection. *Break, break, break*, written also in 1833, is a lyrical expression of the poet's sense of supreme and utter loss. It is interesting to compare it with *All Along the Valley*, written twenty-eight years later in commemoration of the friendship with Arthur

Hallam. "The tender grace of a day that is dead will never come back to me," is the motif of the first poem, while in the second we read, "The voice of the dead is a living voice to me." In this second poem the poet has in some way regained his friend. Between these lyrics comes *In Memoriam*. Although the one hundred and thirty-one "elegies" of which it is composed were written at intervals during a period of seventeen years the notes of time in the poem show that it describes a period of but two years and seven months. The separate songs are of the utmost artistic loveliness. The poem has also the intimate charm of a personal revelation. But above all, it is the history of a soul in its conflict with the loss occasioned by death, and the theme is therefore universal. The distinction of the poem is that the outcome is one not only of resignation but of positive happiness. From selfish absorption in a hopeless grief the poet emerges into a sense of new and very real union here with his friend, and into a belief in immortal union with those we love. Tennyson's belief in immortality was uttered over and over. He said to Bishop Lightfoot, "The cardinal point in Christianity is the Life after Death." To his son he said, "I can hardly understand how any great imaginative man, who has deeply lived, suffered, thought, and wrought, can doubt of the soul's continuous progress in the after-life." One of the poems he especially liked to quote on this topic was *Wages*, the closing lines of which are:

'The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or bask in a summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die."

Crossing the Bar is the last clear, lovely word of serene conviction on the subject of immortality.

On other great questions of spiritual import Tennyson expressed himself as definitely though not so fully. Concerning the close relation possible between man and God we read in *The Higher Pantheism*, a poem of his mature life,

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Of the freedom of the will he says, in *De Profundis*, that impassioned and highly imaginative greeting to his first child,

"This main-miracle that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world."

Of the contest between good and evil in one's own nature and the possible final supremacy of the good, we have the high-minded and courageous lines from *By an Evolutionist*, written when the poet was eighty years of age, and summing up at once a theory and a personal experience:

"If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne

Hold the sceptre, human soul, and rule thy province of the brute.
I have climbed to the snows of age, and I gaze at a field in the past,
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the man is quiet at last
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher."

Of poems that have more strictly to do with the conduct of life only a few can be cited. *The Vision of Sin* portrays the physical breakdown and the brutal cynicism of an old age following a life of sensual pleasure. *St. Simeon Stylites* represents the lowest form of asceticism. St. Simeon shows remarkable persistence and power of endurance, and his desire is for the crown promised to the faithful. But we see him proud of his martyrdom, grasping after spiritual glory, petty, jealous, essentially an egoist. Hence his rigid mastery of the body fails to secure spiritual exaltation. *The Palace of Art* represents the sin and suffering of a soul that for the sake of absorption in the highest intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction isolates herself from the world. The riddle of the painful earth is not her concern. The common people are to her but swine who may graze and wallow and breed and sleep as they choose. But the beauty of her lordly pleasure-house, her intellectual preëminence, her steady communication with the noblest minds as they have revealed themselves in music, pictures, and books, fail after a time to please her. Her selfish determination to find individual satisfaction for what she calls her higher

nature results in satiety, self-loathing, and an unbearable loneliness. Her regeneration is complete when she throws off her royal robes of selfish egoism and puts herself into relation with the simplest human life. She finally learns that personal attainments come to their highest possible value only when shared by others. These three poems were in the volume of 1842, and they constitute a kind of trilogy of human experience in the realm of sin. Each poem represents a mistaken pursuit of satisfaction, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual.

The three characters just mentioned were frankly typical or allegorical. And Tennyson's didacticism very often led him to the creation of types rather than of individuals. *The Holy Grail* is a series of character studies of knights who go forth in quest of the Holy Grail. Most of them fail or but partially succeed, and each knight stands as typical of classes of people who similarly fail in the search for spiritual exaltation. Sir Gawain, for instance, was easily diverted from the quest, as shallow, worldly-minded, luxury-loving people are always diverted. Sir Lancelot fails because there is strife in his soul between the holiness he longs for and the sin he cherishes. His vision of the Grail is only in its aspect of wrath and condemnation, and it leaves him "blasted and burnt and blinded." Of the other knights, Sir Percivale is the most interesting as a well worked out type. He fails at first because of proud confidence in his own strength; then, with sudden change of mood, because of undue absorption

in his own unworthiness; then because he thinks to slake his thirst for holiness in the beauty of nature, in domestic love, earthly glory, popular applause. In the realm of religion *The Holy Grail* finally teaches the same lesson as *The Palace of Art* in the realm of the intellect. Both poems put into concrete form the social creed in Tennyson's *Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition*, where he says that each man should

> "find his own in all men's good,
> And all men work in noble brotherhood."

No quest for intellectual or spiritual vision is sound at the heart if divorced from daily life. King Arthur sums the matter up when he says that the most exalted and trustworthy visions come to the man doing his work "in the space of land allotted him to plow."

It is on subjects that have to do with religious faith and with human conduct that Tennyson has done his greatest work. He began writing in a light, uncertain, dilettante fashion, but as he came into a consciousness of himself his themes broadened and deepened until finally his genius was soberly and deliberately set to discuss fundamental and universal human problems, and these he met in a spirit of frankness and fairness that kept him in touch with the foremost scientists of his day, and yet with a final definiteness of faith that made his poetry the support of many whose own faith had proved less steadfast. And in all matters of practical conduct his poems consistently held up noble ideals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The mass of critical and biographical material concerning Lord Tennyson and his works is such as to preclude the possibility of giving here a complete bibliography. The books given below are chosen because they will probably be easily accessible and because they are especially suggestive in connection with the poems included in the present volume.

For biographical material, see chiefly:

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a Memoir by His Son, 2 vols. [Macmillan, 1899]. A brief sketch, with many very interesting illustrations, is found in the series of *Bookman Biographies*, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll [Hodder & Stoughton, London]. The volume on *Tennyson* is by G. K. Chesterton and Dr. Richard Garnett [1903].

For general criticism, see the following books:

Illustrations of Tennyson, by J. Churton Collins [Chatto & Windus, 1891], is chiefly a study of Lord Tennyson's Greek and Latin sources. *A Handbook to the Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, by Morton Luce [Geo. Bell & Sons, 1895]. *A Study of the Works of Tennyson*, by Edward C. Tainsh [Macmillan, 1893]. *The Poetry of Tennyson* [Charles Scribner's Sons, tenth edition, 1898] and *Poems by Tennyson* [Athenæum Press Series, 1903], by Henry van Dyke. *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, Stopford Brooke [G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903].

For studies of special poems, see the following:

Studies in the Idylls by Henry Elsdale [Kegan Paul, 1878] has to do especially with the allegory of the *Idylls*. *Essays on Lord Tennyson's Idylls of the King* by Harold Littledale [Macmillan, 1893] treats of the sources of the *Idylls* and has much valuable textual comment. *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* by John Rhŷs [Clarendon Press, 1891], and *Tennyson's Idylls of the King and Arthurian Story from the 16th Century* by M. W. MacCallum [MacLehose, 1894] are studies in the sources and the development of the *Idylls*.

Of the many special studies of *In Memoriam* the review by Mr. Gladstone [*Gleanings from Past Years*, Vol. II, pp. 136-7, quoted in *Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Memoir by His Son*] was, in Tennyson's opinion, one of the ablest that appeared. *A Companion to In Memoriam*, Mrs. Elizabeth R. Chapman [Macmillan, 1888] is spoken of in the *Memoir* of Tennyson as the "best analysis" of the poem. An elaborate study of the poem is to be found in *Tennyson's In Memoriam: Its Purpose and Structure* by John F. Genung [Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899].

For *The Princess*, see *A Study of the Princess*, S. E. Dawson [Dawson Brothers, Montreal, 1882] which Tennyson himself thought to be an able and thoughtful review.

There are also very many essays and magazine articles in the way of personal recollections, literary appreciations, interpretations, and comparative studies.

SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Leodogran, the king of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen host
Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
Drew all their petty princedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.

And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the children, housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again
And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood.
And on the spike that split the mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son"—the King
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help us thou!
For here between the man and beast we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
But heard the call and came; and Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass:
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,

Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great lords and barons of his realm
Flash'd forth and into war; for most of these,
Colleaguing with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying: "Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King."

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,
And thinking as he rode: "Her father said
That there between the man and beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under me,
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will nor work my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live."

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the tale—
When Arthur reach'd a field of battle bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
Was all so clear about him that he saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
And even in high day the morning star.
So when the King had set his banner broad,
At once from either side, with trumpet-blast,
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto blood,
The long-lanced battle let their horses run.
And now the barons and the kings prevail'd,
And now the King, as here and there that war
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk the world
Made lightnings and great thunders over him,
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main might,
And mightier of his hands with every blow,
And leading all his knighthood threw the kings,
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemont of Wales,
Claudius, and Clariance of Northumberland,
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,

And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
To one who sins, and deems himself alone
And all the world asleep, they swerved and brake
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands
That hack'd among the flyers, "Ho! they yield!"
So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
And honour'd most. "Thou dost not doubt me King,
So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-day."
"Sir and my liege," he cried, "the fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battle-field.
I know thee for my King!" Whereat the two,
For each had warded either in the fight,
Sware on the field of death a deathless love.
And Arthur said, "Man's word is God in man:
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death."

Then quickly from the foughten field he sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, "If I in aught have served thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart
Debating—"How should I that am a king,
However much he holp me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?"—lifted his voice, and call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: "Knowest thou aught of Arthur's
birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said:
"Sir King, there be but two old men that know;
And each is twice as old as I; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art, and one
Is Merlin's master—so they call him—Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar ran
Before the master, and so far that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth."

To whom the King Leodogran replied:
"O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share of me:
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him, the King said:
"I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase; but wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorloïs,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?"

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, "Ay."
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake—
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the King—

"Sir, there be many rumours on this head;
For there be those who hate him in their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man;
And there be those who deem him more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven. But my belief
In all this matter—so ye care to learn—
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorloïs, he that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne;
And daughters had she borne him,—one whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;
But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,
So loathed the bright dishonour of his love
That Gorloïs and King Uther went to war,
And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
And there was none to call to but himself.

So, compass'd by the power of the king,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died himself,
Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.
And that same night, the night of the new year,
By reason of the bitterness and grief
That vext his mother, all before his time
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
To Merlin, to be holden far apart
Until his hour should come, because the lords
Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child
Piecemeal among them, had they known: for each
But sought to rule for his own self and hand,
And many hated Uther for the sake
Of Gorloïs. Wherefore Merlin took the child,
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own;
And no man knew. And ever since the lords
Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,
So that the realm has gone to wrack; but now,
This year, when Merlin—for his hour had come—
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,
Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir, your king,'
A hundred voices cried: 'Away with him!
No king of ours! a son of Gorloïs he,

Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro' his craft,
And while the people clamour'd for a king,
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great lords
Banded, and so brake out in open war.''

Then while the king debated with himself
If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
Or born the son of Gorloïs after death,
Or Uther's son and born before his time,
Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would, the king
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat:
''A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his men
Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye this king—
So many those that hate him, and so strong,
So few his knights, however brave they be—
Hath body enow to hold his foemen down?''

''Oh King,'' she cried, ''and I will tell thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him;
For I was near him when the savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat
Crowned on the daïs, and his warriors cried,
'Be thou the king, and we will work thy will
Who love thee.' Then the King, in low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his own self

That when they rose, knighted from kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake, and cheer'd his Table Round
With large, divine, and comfortable words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King;
And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur, smote
Flame-colour, vert, and azure, in three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair queens
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his own—
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out. A mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns

A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep—calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world—and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down."

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
"The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;" and she said,
"Daughter of Gorloïs and Ygerne am I;"
"And therefore Arthur's sister?" ask'd the king.
She answer'd, "These be secret things," and sign'd
To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song

Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw;
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half-heard—the same that afterward
Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom

And then the Queen made answer: "What know I?
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorloïs; yea and dark was Uther too,
Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
Moreover, always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world.'"

"Ay," said the king, "and hear ye such a cry?
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?"

"O King!" she cried, "and I will tell thee true.
He found me first when yet a little maid.
Beaten I had been for a little fault
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he—
I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,
And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,

And dried my tears, being a child with me.
And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for me,
For then I surely thought he would be king.

"But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,

Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars. 'And this same child,' he said,
'Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Till this were told.' And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:—

" 'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

" 'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"'Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows;
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou
Fear not to give this King thine only child,
Guinevere; so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,
But pass, again to come, and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their king."

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing "Shall I answer yea or nay?"
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze
And made it thicker; while the phantom king
Sent out at times a voice; and here or there

Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, "No king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours;"
Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth
And bring the Queen, and watch'd him from the gates;
And Lancelot past away among the flowers—
For then was latter April—and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King
That morn was married, while in stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,
The sun of May descended on their King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen.
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love.

And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
"King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake:
"Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
Great lords from Rome before the portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King:—

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May!
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world—'Let the King reign!'

"Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon helm,
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

"Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the lust!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

"Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is king, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!"

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.
There at the banquet those great lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Strode in and claim'd their tribute as of yore.
But Arthur spake: "Behold, for these have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me their King;
The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And we that fight for our fair father Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay." So those great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

GARETH AND LYNETTE

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted Pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
"How he went down," said Gareth, "as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,

To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,' said so—he—
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?" She laugh'd,
"Thou art but a wild-goose to question it."
"Then, mother, an ye love the child," he said,
"Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my well-beloved,
An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and thought
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings.'
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One that had loved him from his childhood, caught

And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love,' and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,
And brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
"Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses: let me go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the Barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,

No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
So make thy manhood mightier day by day;
Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man."

Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a King, like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the King
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd—
But to be won by force—and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the King:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,

That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one—they call'd her Fame; and one,—O mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you—Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said,
"Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King—
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,
When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly, "Not an hour,
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
The Idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be King save him who makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily, "Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother,—I demand."

And Gareth cried,
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,
"The thrall in person may be free in soul,

And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour,
When waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down

Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, "Let us go no further, lord.
Here is a city of Enchanters, built
By fairy Kings." The second echo'd him,
"Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To Northward, that this King is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
"Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;

And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl: they call'd
To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King: but these, my men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer playing on him
And saying, "Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever."

Gareth spake
Anger'd, "Old Master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems

Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?''

But the Seer replied,
''Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?
'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.''

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said, ''My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends.''

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass

Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendour of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd no more—
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,
And thought, "For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak."
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged about the throne,
Clear honour shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,
"A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye? gold or field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye."

And Arthur, "Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead;
And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son."

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag."

But Arthur, "We sit King, to help the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee hence—
Lest that rough humour of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savour in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,

Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honour all the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. "The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;
When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare without a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,

Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl:
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,
Crafts, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!"
And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
"A boon, Sir King (his voice was all ashamed),
For see ye not how weak and hungerworn
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight."

To him the King,
"A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine."

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen,

"Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near, "Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands
Large, fair and fine!—Some young lad's mystery—
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
For horse and armour: fair and fine, forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry him, and labour him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die"—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him.
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale

Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end—
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the smoke, at once

I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the King's—
Descend into the city:" whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him,
"Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees,
"My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King—
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,

Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King—
"But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?
Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,
"I have given him the first quest: he is not proven.
Look therefore when he calls for this in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain."

Then that same day there past into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said—
"Lynette my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stayed
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him:
And but delays his purport till thou send

To do the battle with him, thy chief man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who always rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,

"A boon, Sir King—this quest!" then—for he
mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. "Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
Go therefore," and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave."
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring "kitchen-knave."

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry fled

The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
"God bless the King, and all his fellowship!"
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,

His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath past his time—
My scullion knave! Thralls to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime—
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave.
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire—
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,
"Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword."
"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are overfine

To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies:"
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Mutter'd the damsel, "Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie upon him—
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier than he)
Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, "Hence
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind," for there was Kay.
"Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know thee, ay—
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall."
"Have at thee then," said Kay: they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke.

"What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—thou!—
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd gently, "say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face."

"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved.
"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way

Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the only way."

So till the dusk that follow'd even-song
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward—in the deeps whereof a mere,
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a serving man
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
"They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere."
Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee."
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
"Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried again,
"Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.

Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?"

Gareth sharply spake,
"None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbourage?"

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harbourage, well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him—
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing woman's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."
Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,

And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
"Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she replied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously,
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.

Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' one serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass." "Nay, nay," she said,
"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem

Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him, shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, "Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.

Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own."
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace."
She reddening, "Insolent scullion: I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.

Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake, "Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed:
I scent it twenty-fold." And then she sang,
"'O morning star' (not that tall felon there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
'O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—
The second brother in their fool's parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd laughingly,
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,

To worry, and not to flee—and—knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,

Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met midstream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee."
"Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?"
"Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

"'O Sun' (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),
'O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

"'O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

"'O birds, that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight,
That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she cried,

"Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armour off him, these will turn the blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?" and the damsel cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star;
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of Even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,

They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,
But up like fire he started: and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!"
He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round—
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin—
Strike—strike—the wind will never change again."
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.

"I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
"Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,
"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"'O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colours after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me.'

"Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added—Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art."

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold

He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed! care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
"Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.
Know ye not these?" and Gareth lookt and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—
"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES"—"HESPERUS"—

"Nox"—"Mors," beneath five figures, armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a Shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
"Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind!"

For one—delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
"Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend."
And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?"
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—

Device and sorcery and unhappiness—
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And Lancelot answer'd, "Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted him."

Then Gareth, "Thou—Lancelot!—thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant, "Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
Who being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight—but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon:
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said,
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise

To call him shamed, who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven; and thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,
"Ay well—ay well—for worse than being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they sought and found.
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed.
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one

Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot"—and she clapt her hands—
"Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment."

Said Lancelot, "Peradventure he, you name,
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield;
"Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord!—
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence: let us go."

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.

A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the foe falls!"
An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor pealing there!"
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying,
"Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung the three: I see thee maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest."

"Nay, Prince," she cried,
"God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus—and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth, "Here be rules. I know but one
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way." "Heaven help thee," sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, "There."
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;

Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands, and courtesy; but when the Prince
Three times had blown—after long hush—at last—
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter—some ten steps—
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers
As if for pity?" But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher: a maiden swoon'd;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, "Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bade me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.
They never dream'd the passes would be past."
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend.
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
And he, that once was king, had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
Saying, "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won; but meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
(However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!' "
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,

The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I

Before a King who honours his own word,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself:
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.

And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not: some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
Here laugh'd the father saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear
It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."

"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."
He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he:
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O tell us—for we live apart—you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore

Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carv'd of one emerald centr'd in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,

"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew

Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favour of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine

Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath

Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answer'd, "One,
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make

Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,
"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,

Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone—
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favour of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried, "Advance and take thy prize
The diamond;" but he answer'd, "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head:"
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw—
Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore, rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honour: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,
And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,

Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;

And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.' "

Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying that, she choked
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she swoon'd.
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:

"Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer, "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,
Meseem'd of what they knew not; so myself—
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sir, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,

Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates

Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,

"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colours on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the colour; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him.

And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live:

For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes.
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me, that I make
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart

To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done."
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied:
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remain'd, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

And when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;

But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"
"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"
(He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,

He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,

Deny me not," she said—"ye never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows,
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier

Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed

With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,
I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumours be:
When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half-turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine

Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair

Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the
stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they passed away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames

Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.
Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm),
"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,
"Queen, she would not be content

Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage

For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection said,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honour and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons

Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freëst," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself, "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,

May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd the Pure,
Had past into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honour'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came; and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

"O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years;
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale. But thee,
When first thou camest—such a courtesy

Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King: and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?''

''Nay,'' said the knight; ''for no such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls, and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.''

To whom the monk: ''The Holy Grail!—I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We moulder—as to things without I mean—
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?''

''Nay, monk! what phantom?'' answer'd Percivale.
''The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disappear'd."

To whom the monk: "From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?"

"A woman," answer'd Percivale, "a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,

With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court.
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
'O Father!' ask'd the maiden, 'might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?' 'Nay,' said he,
'I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.'
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!
And 'O my brother Percivale,' she said,
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, "It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight." And the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colours leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd

Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armour, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful!'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight, and none
In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;

And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying: 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city;' and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle. O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it 'the Siege Perilous,'
Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
'No man could sit but he should lose himself.'
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!'

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day;
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware.
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
"What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale, "the King,
Was not in hall; for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,

An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help; for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest. So the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo, there! the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!

Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt!'
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall;
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, 'We have still a king.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank; and who shall blazon it? when and how?—
O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away!

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all;
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest; and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,'—
Because the hall was all in tumult—some
Vowing, and some protesting,—'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,
'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn.' 'Yea, yea,' said he,
'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?'

" 'Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the holy thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
'Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'

" 'Lo now,' said Arthur, 'have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
"O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."'

"'Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the King, 'for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye that follow but the leader's bell,'—
Brother, the King was hard upon his knights,—
'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Percivales'—
For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad;—'nay,' said he, 'but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood—
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more. Ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this quest, may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made.'

"So when the sun broke next from underground,
All the great Table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken—never yet
Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, 'Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!'

"But when the next day brake from underground—
O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old

The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling 'God speed!' but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud.
'This madness has come on us for our sins.'
So to the Gate of the three Queens we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, 'This quest is not for thee.'
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, 'This quest is not for thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'
I said, 'I am not worthy of the quest;'
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,

'Rest here;' but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armour with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armour jewelled everywhere;
And on the splendour came, flashing me blind,
And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd; the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.

And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
'Where is that goodly company,' said I,
'That so cried out upon me?' and he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
'Whence and what art thou?' and even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in grief,
'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!'

And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

"'O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
"Take thou my robe," she said, "for all is thine,"
And all her form shone forth with sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she

Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east.
But her thou hast not known; for what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad.' When the hermit made an end,
In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
'Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,

And hence I go, and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go.'

Y

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

"There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry watercourses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
Round us and death; for every moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire. And at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd

Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armour starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl—
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,
And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
Glad that no phantom vext me more, return'd
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius,—"for in sooth
These ancient books—and they would win thee—
teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls—and mingle with our folk;
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—
O brother, saying this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?"

Then Sir Percivale:

"All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,

A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it.
Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,

The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue:
'We have heard of thee; thou art our greatest knight,
Our Lady says it, and we well believe.
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth.''

Then said the monk, ''Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend; but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more—to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,

Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?"

"Yea, so," said Percivale:
"One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he
me,
And each made joy of either. Then he ask'd:
'Where is he? hast thou seen him—Lancelot?—
Once,'
Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across me—mad,
And maddening what he rode; and when I cried,
"Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?" Lancelot shouted, "Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way!"
So vanish'd.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
Beyond the rest. He well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,

Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the holy quest.
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's words—
A mocking fire: 'what other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?'
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle—what else?—
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
Such as no wind could move; and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud. Then came a night

Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone: 'And then to me, to me,'
Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—
Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me!—
In colour like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go."

To whom the monk: "And I remember now
That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board,
And mighty reverent at our grace was he:
A square-set man and honest, and his eyes,
An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: "And that can I,
Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones
Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

"And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
And those that had not, stood before the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade me hail,
Saying: 'A welfare in thine eye reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now—the quest,
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?'

"So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,

He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
Of Gawain, 'Gawain, was this quest for thee?'

"'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for me;
For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me.'

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to him,
'Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail:' and Bors,
'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
I saw it;' and the tears were in his eyes.

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
'Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the King, 'my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for thee?'

"'Our mightiest!' answer'd Lancelot, with a
groan;
'O King!'—and when he paused methought I
spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—
'O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I would work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away.
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
"I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin."
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! There was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs,
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
"Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps
With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb
For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
"Glory and joy and honour to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!"
Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd, and this quest was not for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,

Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words.—
A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King.—
Well, I will tell thee: 'O King, my liege,' he said,
'Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward.'

"'Deafer,' said the blameless King,
'Gawain, and blinder unto holy things
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"'Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot: never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,

With such a closeness, but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

"'And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him otherwhere.

"'And some among you held that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow.
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done, but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,

This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye have seen.'

"So spake the King; I knew not all he meant."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

That story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend

Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd,
"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling

To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist,

And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,

And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King,
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere. "My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred unharm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me King.
And well for thee saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of knighthood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,

Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be.
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere.
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow.
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more—

O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:

The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell

Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay

Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells

Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he; but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,

For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame.
So, leaping lightly from the boat
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.

Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,

From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow

Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

THE PALACE OF ART

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "While the world runs round and round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

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Four courts I made, East, West and South and North
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
  Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
  Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round tne roofs a gilded gallery
  That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
  Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
  Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
  Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
  To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
  From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
  My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
  And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
  And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,
  Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
  Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires

From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.
* * * * * *
* * * * * *
Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,

The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth design'd.

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Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair

Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
  Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
  Not less than life, design'd.
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Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
  Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
  The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
  Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
  And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
  A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
  From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
  Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
  With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
  With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
  So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,

More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,
"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

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* * * * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades, enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all night

The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
"No voice," she shriek'd in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,

His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,

While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.

Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling

Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd —down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

"OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS"

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

OR, THE PICTURES

This morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the gardener's daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;

So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will *you* paint like this?" and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest),
" 'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March."
And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go and see
The gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;

Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.
The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.
In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the gardener's daughter? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air

Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these)
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.
And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
"Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"
And I made answer, "Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise."
Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses glanced, and momently
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.
"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."
He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.
For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.
So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd
Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her:
"Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
Less exquisite than thine."
She look'd: but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,

And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.
I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.
So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all."
So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchman peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips: then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the colour to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, "I am thine."
Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those who, setting wide the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconcilement, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.
Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,

For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,

That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
"Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.

It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! this dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book;
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.
But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known: cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself.
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
  My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
  Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
  The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
  The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
  And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
  That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
  On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
  To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
  My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
  Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
  Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
  A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
  A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
  I hear a noise of hymns:

Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;

But blessed forms in whistling storms
  Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
  Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
  That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
  Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
  Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
  This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
  Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
  And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
  Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
  Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
  Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
  By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
  Until I find the holy Grail.

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE SONG OF THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS"

The Child's Grave

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

The Cradle Song

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;

Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

The Bugle Song

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

"Tears, Idle Tears"

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair

Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

A Small, Sweet Idyll

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;

And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

PUBLISHED IN 1852

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet

With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.

Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-temper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free.
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,

Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,

If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.

Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,

Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,

And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

I

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
"The amoighty's a taäkin o' you[1] to 'issén, my friend," a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.

[1] ou as in hour.

Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock[1] ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
"The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

[1] Cockchafer.

VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,[1] fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies[2] afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner[3] 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor[4] yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.[5]

XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,

[1] Bittern. [2] Anemones. [3] One or other. [4] ou as in hour. [5] Clover.

Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt "what a man a beä sewerloy!"
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;

I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

I

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaïns:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaïns.

II

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's 'ouse—
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.[1]
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

[1] This week.

IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

V

Do'ant be stunt:[1] taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

VI

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,

[1] Obstinate.

Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle[1] her
breäd:
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git
hissén clear,
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd
to the shere.

VIII

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity
debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on
'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend
'im a shuvv,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd[2] yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e
married fur luvv.

IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er
munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny
laaïd by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it:
reäson why.

X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us
thinks tha an ass.

[1] Earn. [2] Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

Woä then, proputty, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt[1]—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.[2]

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a been a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.

[1] Makes nothing. [2] The flies are as fierce as anything.

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.

All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His
voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent
in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man
cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it
not He?

"FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of Love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

. . . . . .

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

. . . . . .

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

. . . . . .

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

. . . . . .

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, altho' they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

. . . . . .

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

. . . . . .

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

. . . . . .

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

. . . . . .

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

. . . . . .

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

. . . . . .

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife,
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

. . . . . .

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

SELECTION FROM MAUD; A MONODRAMA

The text of this selection is that of the first edition published in 1837 in *The Tribute*.

Oh! that 'twere possible,
After long grief and pain,
To find the arms of my true-love
Round me once again!

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
Of the land that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces,
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter,
Than anything on earth.

A shadow flits before me—
Not thou, but like to thee.
Ah God! that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

It leads me forth at Evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes—
For the meeting of to-morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

Do I hear the pleasant ditty,
That I heard her chant of old?
But I wake—my dream is fled.
Without knowledge, without pity—
In the shuddering dawn behold,
By the curtains of my bed,
That abiding phantom cold.

Then I rise: the eave-drops fall
And the yellow vapors choke.
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes—a dull red ball,
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke,
On the misty river-tide.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosseth here, it crosseth there—

Thro' all the crowd, confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call—
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet even-fall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old Manorial Hall.

Then the broad light glares and beats,
And the sunk eye flits and fleets,
And will not let me be.
I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me;
Always I long to creep
To some still cavern deep,
And to weep and weep and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

Get thee hence, nor come again
Pass and cease to move about—
Pass, thou death-like type of pain,
Mix not memory with doubt.
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Would the happy Spirit descend
In the chamber or the street

As she looks among the blest;
Should I fear to greet my friend,
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
To the region of thy rest."

But she tarries in her place,
And I paint the beauteous face
Of the maiden, that I lost,
In my inner eyes again,
Lest my heart be overborne
By the thing I hold in scorn,
By a dull mechanic ghost
And a juggle of the brain.

I can shadow forth my bride
As I knew her fair and kind,
As I woo'd her for my wife;
She is lovely by my side
In the silence of my life—
'Tis a phantom of the mind.

'Tis a phantom fair and good;
I can call it to my side,
So to guard my life from ill,
Tho' its ghastly sister glide
And be moved around me still
With the moving of the blood,
That is moved not of the will.

Let it pass, the dreary brow,
Let the dismal face go by.

Will it lead me to the grave?
Then I lose it: it will fly:
Can it overlast the nerves?
Can it overlive the eye?
But the other, like a star,
Thro' the channel windeth far
Till it fade and fail and die,
To its Archetype that waits,
Clad in light by golden gates—
Clad in light the Spirit waits
To embrace me in the sky.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville; "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,

With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd

By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,

And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE ANCIENT SAGE

A thousand summers ere the time of Christ
From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved, and honor'd him, and yet
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his hand
A scroll of verse—till that old man before
A cavern whence an affluent fountain pour'd
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem to draw
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source is higher,
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and higher,

The cloud that hides it—higher still, the heavens
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and whereout
The cloud descended. Force is from the heights.
I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the hills.
What hast thou there? Some deathsong for the Ghouls
To make their banquet relish? let me read.

"How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
Were never heard or seen."

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and wilt dive
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know;
For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,

The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath, within
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million-millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
Or even than the Nameless is to me.
And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,
Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names.
And if the Nameless should withdraw from all
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

"And since—from when this earth began—
The Nameless never came
Among us, never spake with man,
And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one:
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!
She reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and "No,"
She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wail'd "Mirage!"

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,
The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the Gods gone blind
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
That none but Gods could build this house of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work of man,
A beauty with defect—till That which knows,
And is not known, but felt thro' what we feel
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make
And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours
That cancel weal with woe,

And wind the front of youth with flowers,
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain;
But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
Break into "Thens" and "Whens" the Eternal Now:
This double seeming of the single world!—
My words are like the babblings in a dream
Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.
But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

"The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;
Who clings to earth, and once would dare
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold;
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind;
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;
The tiger spasms tear his chest,

The palsy wags his head;
The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;
The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The Learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms
The merchant's hope no more;
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;
The poet whom his Age would quote
As heir of endless fame—
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlived his day,

And darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that when my Youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust—
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rosetree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates of Light,
For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and then
Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory in all
The splendours and the voices of the world!
And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet

No phantoms, watching from a phantom shore
Await the last and largest sense to make
The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years
As laughter over wine,
And vain the laughter as the tears,
O brother, mine or thine,

"For all that laugh, and all that weep,
And all that breathe are one
Slight ripple on the boundless deep
That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless deep
Feels that the deep is boundless, and itself
For ever changing form, but evermore
One with the boundless motion of the deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set
The lamps alight, and call
For golden music, and forget
The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my son—
But earth's dark forehead flings athwart the heavens
Her shadow crown'd with stars—and yonder—out
To northward—some that never set, but pass
From sight and night to lose themselves in day.
I hate the black negation of the bier,

And wish the dead, as happier than ourselves
And higher, having climb'd one step beyond
Our village miseries, might be borne in white
To burial or to burning, hymn'd from hence
With songs in praise of death, and crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day
Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word
Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they say
Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
On me, when boy, there came what then I call'd,
Who knew no books and no philosophies,
In my boy-phrase, "The Passion of the Past."
The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
As if the late and early were but one—
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
Had murmurs "Lost and gone and lost and gone!"
A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell—
Desolate sweetness—far and far away—
What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?
I know not and I speak of what has been.
And more, my son! for more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself

The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

"And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of the Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of the Sun,
And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
Some say, the Light was father of the Night,
And some, the Night was father of the Light,
No night no day!—I touch thy world again —
No ill no good! such counter-terms, my son,
Are border-races, holding, each its own
By endless war: but night enough is there
In yon dark city: get thee back: and since
The key to that weird casket, which for thee
But holds a skull, is neither thine nor mine,
But in the hand of what is more than man,

Or in man's hand when man is more than man,
Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,
And make thy gold thy vassal not thy king,
And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,
And send the day into the darken'd heart;
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
A dying echo from a falling wall;
Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil eye—
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms;
Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied wine;
Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wantonness;
And more—think well! Do-well will follow thought,
And in the fatal sequence of this world
An evil thought may soil thy children's blood;
But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,
And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness
A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou
Look higher, then — perchance — thou mayest—
beyond
A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
Strike on the Mount of Vision!

So, farewell.

"FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—"O venusta Sirmio!"
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
"Frater Ave atque Vale,"—as we wander'd to and fro,
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below,
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

I

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the Magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd,
"Follow The Gleam."

IV

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at

Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labour,
Slided The Gleam—

VI

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length

To the city and palace
Of Arthur the king;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,

Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom
And so to the land's
Last limit I came——
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

FAR-FAR-AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

What sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far–far–away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far–far–away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,
Far–far–away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far–far–away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of Birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far–far–away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far–far–away?

THE THROSTLE

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then *so* new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

NOTES

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING

Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King* is a series of twelve stories connected by the fact that they all have to do with the history of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Taken together they carry King Arthur's work from its glorious inception, through the early days of success, later through mistakes and sins on the part of many of the knights, to the final dissolution of the Order and the death of Arthur.

The two books from which Tennyson gained his material for these stories are the *Mabinogion*, a collection of Welsh fairy tales and romances, translated by Lady Charlotte Guest, and published in 1838–49, and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. From the first of these books came *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid*, and details in other stories. The chief source, however, is the *Morte d'Arthur*, which was brought out by Caxton, the first English printer, in 1485. In a quaint preface Caxton tells us that the stories in the book were taken by Sir Thomas Malory "out of certain French books and reduced into English." This was done, he says, because there were "many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England" who thought that King Arthur "ought to be remembered amongst us Englishmen tofore all other Christian kings."

Malory's book was the first to gather together the stories about King Arthur, but the stories are themselves much older than Malory's time. In 1147 appeared Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which professed to tell the story of the British kings from Brutus, the mythical founder of Britain, down to Cadwallo in 689. His work is a medley of information drawn from various sources, but it is conceded that from its appearance dates a new literary epoch. It was written in Latin, but eight years later (1155) Wace translated it into Norman French under the title *Brut d'Engleterre*. This book made the stories of the kings widely known. About 1205 appeared Layamon's *Brut*, a metrical translation in Middle English of Wace's version. Layamon's poem contained much new material. It is from these books that Malory took the particular tales that pertain to Arthur, and so formed the first Arthuriad. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is now easily accessible in the Globe edition and should be read in connection with Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King*.

Tennyson's interest in the story of Arthur dates from the time when as a mere boy he happened upon Malory's book, and the conception of Arthur as a hero flashed upon him. (*Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Memoir by His Son*, II. 128.) He began early to write on themes connected with the Arthurian legends. In 1832 he published *The Lady of Shalott*, a poem based on the same story as *Lancelot and Elaine*. *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*, though not published till 1842, was partly if not wholly written in 1830. (*Mem.* II., p. 122.) About 1833 Tennyson also wrote a prose sketch entitled *King Arthur*, and about the same time a "Memorandum" of a possible allegorical scheme for the story of Arthur. In one of his 1833–40 MS. books was the rough draft of a scenario showing that he had considered the advisability of presenting the Arthur story as a musical masque. (*Mem.* II. 122–5.) The subject of King Arthur continually haunted him. In 1842 appeared *Sir Galahad* and *Morte d'Arthur*. The second of these was, however, composed much earlier, for Edward Fitzgerald writes, "The 'Morte d'Arthur' when read to us from manuscript in 1835 had no introduction or epilogue." (*Mem.* I. 194.) All these facts are cumulative evidence of the early and definite bent of Tennyson's mind to the subjects afterwards embodied in the *Idylls*. Yet he was very slow to set about the work.

He wrote the *Morte d'Arthur*, as has been said, as early as 1835, but the next of the *Idylls* was not begun till 1856, when he "resumed the plan" with *Merlin and Nimue*, and for three years thereafter he was steadily occupied with various poems of the series. He went to Wales, studied Welsh with local schoolmasters, visited Arthurian localities, re-read Malory, and familiarized himself with the *Mabinogion*. The outcome of the three years' work was the publication, in July, 1859, of *Enid*, *Vivien* (formerly *Nimue*), *Elaine*, and *Guinevere* under the title, *Idylls of the King*. The dedication to the late Prince Consort was added in 1862. In 1869 appeared a volume containing *The Holy Grail*, *The Coming of Arthur*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur* (the enlarged *Morte d'Arthur*). *The Last Tournament* appeared in the December *Contemporary Review*, 1871. *Gareth and Lynette* was already written in November, 1871 (*Mem.* II. 110), but was not published till July, 1872. The epilogue to the Queen was added in 1872. At this point Tennyson thought that he had completed the series, but he afterwards felt that something more was needed to explain Vivien, so he wrote *Balin and Balan*, which appeared in the *Tiresias* volume of 1885. In 1884 *Geraint and Enid* was divided into two parts, and in 1888 the two parts received their present names as separate *Idylls*. Thus the twelve *Idylls* were brought to a close. The present order was determined upon in the edition of 1888.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LINE 1. *Cameliard.* Topographical questions need not "trouble the student of the Tennysonian *Idylls,* for their geography, like their history, is poetically free, and not to be judged by mere prosaic tests of latitude and longitude." (Littledale: *Essays,* p. 49.) There are two general theories as to locality. One places the actions of Arthur in South Britain or South Wales. The other theory is that Arthur was a king of the North Britains of Southern Scotland and of Cambria. "The fact is there were *two* Arthurs: the Arthur of dubious history, a North British general; and the Arthur of fiction, whose deeds are laid in Wales and Armoric Cornwall." (Littledale: *Essays,* p. 48.)

5-9. These lines sum up the history of Arthur's realm both before and after the incident of his aid to Leodogran.

13. *Aurelius.* Aurelius Ambrosius was "a descendant of the last Roman general who claimed the purple as an Emperor in Britain." He died by poison, and was succeeded by his brother Uther, who gained several victories over the Saxons.

16. *For a space.* These words refer to the whole extent of Arthur's successful reign in Britain.

17. *Table Round.* Cf. note on Gareth and Lynette, line 816.

26. *The wolf,* etc. Compare the classical legend of Romulus and Remus. There are numerous Indian stories of wolf-suckled children. One undoubted case is cited in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay,* Vol. I. "Such children were all idiots and did not long survive their restoration to human society." The fabulous were-wolves of the Germans and the loup-garous of France were men who voluntarily or involuntarily turned into wolves and became fierce cannibals.

31. *Mock.* Imitate.

34. *Roman legions.* The Roman legions were withdrawn from Britain in 410 A. D. After that the petty kings warred against each other. Urien, who attacked Leodogran, was King of North Wales. Following the disasters of internal strife came the "heathen horde" of the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, who "swarmed over seas" and harried the land.

39. *Spitting the child.* A spit was a long iron bar thrust through meat in order to roast it before a fire.

41. *Arthur newly crown'd.* See lines 227-236 for description of this crowning.

50. *The golden symbol.* At the time of the death of Vortigern, whose throne Uther usurped, a dragon appeared in the sky. "Merlin interpreted the portent to designate Uther as king. After his victory Uther caused two dragons of gold to

be made; one he dedicated to Heaven, the other he caused to be borne at the head of his army. Hence his name, Penn (head) Dragon." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, page 30.) In *Guinevere*, ll. 589-95, we read of Arthur:

> "And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
> To which for crest the golden dragon clung
> Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
> Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
> Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
> The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
> Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire."

58. *His tents*, etc. In the edition of 1869 these lines read:

> "His tents beside the forest: *and* he drave
> The heathen, *and he* slew the beast, and fell'd
> The forest, *and let* in the sun."

Note the gain in unity and order as the lines now stand.

72. *This is the son*, etc. The "uproar" when Arthur was crowned (line 42), and the revolt of the Barons and Kings against him arose out of doubt as to his royal birth. Bellicent later (ll.253-423) tells Leodogran all the stories about the origin of Arthur.

92. *Have power*, etc. In *Guinevere*, line 296, the little novice repeats the words of the bard concerning Arthur:

> . . . . . "and could he find
> A woman in her womanhood as great
> As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
> The twain together well might change the world."

Arthur in his farewell to Guinevere describes the nobility of his court, and says (*Guinevere*, l. 481):

> "And all this throve before I wedded thee."

94-133. These lines were not in the edition of 1869. They were added in 1894.

94. *He who tells*, etc. In this indirect way Tennyson refers to Malory or to himself.

96. *The world*, etc. The intensity of Arthur's desire makes his sense perceptions especially keen. Wordsworth says in *Tintern Abbey* that "An eye made quiet by the power of joy can see into the life of things." "In *Pericles* (v. i.), Shakespeare makes the hearing of Pericles so intensified by joy that he can hear the music of the spheres." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, page 67.)

103. *The long-lanced battle*. The warriors armed with long lances. Note the sense of eagerness in this passage. The men, the horses, the trumpets and clarions all strain towards the fray.

111. *Carádos,* etc. This list of conquered kings is from Malory I, vi, xiv, xv.

124. *His warrior,* etc. Lancelot; see l. 446.

146. *Knowest thou aught,* etc. All the stories of Arthur's origin are told naturally and inevitably in the efforts of the chamberlain, Arthur's three envoys, and Bellicent, to satisfy the doubts of King Leodogran.

150. *Merlin* and *Bleys. See Gareth and Lynette,* note on l. 202.

172. *Ulfius and Brastias.* In Malory, Ulfius is one of Uther's knights. Through the plotting of Ulfius and Merlin, Uther secured admission to Ygerne's castle at Tintagil, while her husband was at Terrabil. Brastias was one of the knights of Gorloïs, but after his death evidently remained with Uther. When Merlin selected knights to guard Arthur, Ulfius and Brastias were among those most trusted. After the crowning of Arthur, Ulfius was made chamberlain, and Brastias, warden (Malory, *Morte D'Arthur* I, iv, and v).

173. *Bedivere.* See *The Passing of Arthur.*

186. *Tintagil castle.* The ruins of Tintagil castle are on the sea coast in Cornwall not far from the town of Launceston. Tennyson visited the place in 1847 and again forty years later. "All the old memories and visions of the place of the *Idylls* came upon him, and he regarded the whole place with a kind of first-love feeling." (*Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson.* Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. 3, page 456.) The fight between King Uther and Gorloïs is described in full in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* I; i and ii.

233. *Thro' his craft.* Malory gives a long account of a miraculous sword fast in a great stone, with an inscription saying that the person who could pluck it out would be rightful king. The young Arthur was the only one to whom the sword yielded. He easily plucked it forth.

244. *Bellicent.* The wife of Lot, Queen of Orkney and Lothian in north-east Scotland. For her sons, Gawain and Modred, see *Gareth and Lynette,* note on ll. 25 and 26. Their characters as youths are brought out also in this poem, ll. 319 324.

252. *Body enow.* Strength enough. In the 1869 edition, Tennyson wrote "beat." Why is the "hold" in this version an improvement?

271. *Thro' the cross,* etc. A stained glass window back of the King showed a picture of the crucifixion. The flame-co or, green, and blue of the glass shone down upon each of the three fair Queens who now initiate Arthur into his kingship, even as they are the ones to take him in the ship of death to the Valley of Avilion. See *The Passing of Arthur,* ll. 452-456. The Bishop

of Ripon once asked Tennyson if they were right who interpreted the three Queens as Faith, Hope, and Charity. The answer was, "They are right and they are not right. They mean that and they do not. They are three of the noblest of women. They are also those three Graces, but they are much more. I hate to be tied down to say '*This* means *that*,' because the thought within the image is much more than any one interpretation." (*Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson. Vol. III, p. 442.)

279. *Mage*. One who practices magic arts.

282. *The Lady of the Lake*. See *Gareth and Lynette*, ll. 210-219 and notes. The Lady of the Lake evidently typifies the power of Religion. Her statue over the gate is in the shape of a cross, she holds a censer, and on her breast is the sacred fish. It is she who gives the King this huge cross-hilted sword with which to drive out the heathen. She is associated with incense, minster gloom, and holy hymns, and has mystic, miraculous powers. Mr. Elsdale interprets Merlin as typifying intellect and imagination. Then the "subtler magic" of the Lady of the Lake is the superior power of the spiritual. (Littledale: *Essays*, p. 71.)

284. *Samite*. A rich silk fabric worn in the middle ages.

294. *Excalibur*. Cf. Malory: "And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force, said Merlin, hereby is a sword that shall be yours, an I may. So they rode till they came to a lake . . . and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo! said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damosel going upon the lake. What damosel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin. . . . Anon withal came the damosel unto Arthur. . . . Damosel, said Arthur, what sword is that? . . . I would it were mine, for I have no sword." The damsel offers him the sword in return for the promise of any gift she may ask. Then Arthur rows out and takes the sword and the scabbard. The arm clothed in white samite disappears under the water. In Malory II, iii, when the Lady comes to seek the gift of Arthur she tells him that the name of the sword is "Excalibur," that is to say, "Cut-steel." In I, vii, we read that Excalibur "was so bright in his enemies eyes, that it gave light like thirty torches." This brightness came in part from the magic jewels on the hilt. For the further history of Excalibur, see *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 195-206, 220-232, 256-277, 301-314.

298. *Elfin Urim*. "Elfin" means of magical origin. In *Exodus*, ch. 28, we are told that Aaron and his sons were set apart

for the priesthood. The holy garments of Aaron and his breast-plate are minutely described. In the midst of the twelve precious stones of the breast-plate were to be the *Urim* and *Thummim*. Just what they were is not known. But their traditional splendor and mysterious power came naturally into the mind of Queen Bellicent when she describes the splendid, mysterious sword given to Arthur.

322. *But Modred.* See *Garcth and Lynette* note on l. 26.

329. *This king is fair.* See *Passing of Arthur*, l. 384. In *The Last Tournament*, ll. 661-663, Tristram speaks of Arthur's "steel-blue eyes," the "golden beard that clothed his lips with light," and his "sun-bright hair."

379. *A ninth one.* "The popular Welsh tradition is that the waves are the sheep of the mermaid Gwenhidwy, and the ninth wave is called her 'ram,' as it is larger than the other sheep." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, p. 75.)

402. *Rain, rain, and sun.* Tennyson's note on these riddling triplets is: "The truth appears in different guise to divers persons. The one fact is that man comes from the great deep and returns to it." (*Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 457.) The lines are intentionally obscure, for Merlin did not mean to answer Bellicent's questions.

421. *But pass, again to come.* In Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* XXI, vii, we read: "Some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead. . . . And men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. . . . But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse, *Hic jacet Arthurus Rex quondam Rexque futurus.*"

423. *All men hail him.* Compare the prophecy of Merlin to the hostile kings. He said of Arthur, "And, or he die, he shall be long king of all England, and have under his obeissance Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, and more realms than I will now rehearse." (*Morte D'Arthur* I, viii.)

431. *The hind fell*, etc. The peasants were slain and their flocks driven off by bands of robbers.

449. *And Lancelot*, etc. The journey of Lancelot and Guinevere from Cameliard to Arthur's court is described in *Guinevere*, ll. 375-403. See also *Balin and Balan*, ll. 264-275.

451. *In May.* Tennyson's annotation is: The coming of Arthur is on the night of the New Year; when he is wedded the world is white with May; on a summer night the vision of the Holy Grail appears; and the "Last Tournament" is in "the yellowing autumn-tide." Guinevere flees through the mists of autumn, and Arthur's death takes place at midnight

in midwinter. (*Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson,* Vol. III, p. 453, cf. *Introduction,* p. 33.)

452. *Dubric.* Archbishop of Caerleon.

454. *The stateliest,* etc. Malory says it was the church of St. Stephens. (*Morte D'Arthur* III, v.)

459. *Far shone,* etc. Lines 459-469 were not in the edition of 1869. They were added in 1894, as were ll. 475-501.

511. *Roman wall.* The northern limit of Roman government fluctuated, but the Roman wall built between Carlisle and Newcastle represents the furthest limit of the region ruled by Rome.

513. *Arthur strove with Rome.* This contest with Rome and the demand for tribute are not historical.

517. *Twelve great battles.* The list of these battles is given by Lancelot when Lavaine questions him concerning "Arthur's glorious wars." (*Lancelot and Elaine,* ll. 285-316.) The enumeration of the names with the brief descriptive touches gives a vivid impression of the wild regions in which Arthur fought out his wars against the heathen hordes. One battle was "by the white mouth of the violent Glem"; there were "four land battles by the shore of Duglas"; one on Bassa; one in the "gloomy skirts of Celidon the forest"; three were at castle Gurnion, Caerleon, and Agned-Cathregonian; and one "down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treriot." Of the last battle Lancelot says:

> "and on the mount
> Of Badon I myself beheld the King
> Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
> And all his legions crying Christ and him,
> And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
> High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
> Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
> And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
> 'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
> However mild he seems at home, nor cares
> For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
> For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
> Saying, his knights are better men than he—
> Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
> Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
> No greater leader."

The importance of these battles is shown by the fact that in Arthur's castle the twelve great windows were filled with painted glass depicting the twelve battles:

> "And all the light that falls upon the board
> Streams through the twelve great battles of our King."

GARETH AND LYNETTE

LINE 1. *Lot.* King of Orkney. One of the "petty kings" that joined the rebellious barons in the war against Arthur. Cf. ll. 72–80. Bellicent, his wife, was King Arthur's half-sister, who was brought up with him and was loyal to him even when her husband joined the barons against him.

3. *Spate.* Gareth was at his father's home in one of the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland (*The Coming of Arthur*, l. 115); hence it is appropriate for him to use the Gaelic word "spate" to describe a river in flood-time. In line 90 he uses "burns" for streams.

18. *Heaven yield her for it.* An obsolete use of the word "yield" in the sense of "reward."

20. *Discaged.* Tennyson freely makes new compounds with the prefix "dis."

21. *Ever-highering.* A rare verb, either transitive as in "to higher the sails," or intransitive as in this passage, meaning "to become higher."

25. *Gawain.* An elder brother of Gareth, and already one of Arthur's knights. His success in warfare was shown by his blazoned shield (cf. l. 408). But less desirable qualities became apparent later. Note the cavalier fashion in which he pursued the king's quest, and his light courtship of Elaine. (*Lancelot and Elaine*, ll. 550–700.) He was killed in Lancelot's war against the king. It was Gawain's voice that Arthur heard on the night before the last battle. (*The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 30–57.)

26. *Modred.* The sullen, jealous spirit shown by Modred in this passage characterized his whole life. He performed no knightly deeds (cf. ll. 402–9). He hated the queen and Lancelot, and he was envious of Arthur and plotted to supplant him. He was tolerated among the knights of the Round Table only because he was "hunched and halt," and so excuses had been made for him. He is described as having a "narrow, foxy face, heart-hiding smile, and gray, persistent eye." The final revolt against Arthur was headed by Modred, and Arthur's last act was the slaying of the traitor. (*Guinevere*, ll. 10–110; *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 59–64, 150–69.)

36. *Wild-goose.* Why is the goose here, and in line 38, and proverbially, a symbol for foolishness? Dr. Johnson (*Dict.*) defines goose thus: "A large, web-footed water-fowl, noted, I know not why, for foolishness."

46. *Book of Hours.* A book of devotion containing the prayers or offices for the seven stated times of the day set apart for prayer. Many of these books were richly ornamented with illuminations and paintings.

51. *A leash of kings.* A sporting term for three things of any kind, coming from the old custom of having three hounds held together by a thong or leash.

66. *Excalibur.* Arthur's famous sword, given him by the Lady of the Lake (various passages in *The Passing of Arthur*). In the old epics and romances the hero's sword had a name and a personality of its own.

84. *Red berries charm the bird.* That is, lure the bird into the snare.

94. *My prone year.* Milton (*P. L.* iv. 353) says:

> "The sun
> Declined, was hasting now with prone career
> To the ocean isles."

115–118. *Man am I grown*, etc. Cf. ll. 541–4: also this passage from *Guinevere*, ll. 464–74, in which King Arthur says:

> "I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
> To reverence the King, as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
> To honor his own word as if his God's,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her."

133–135. *Who swept the dust*, etc. It was at his marriage banquet that Arthur openly refused longer to pay tribute to Rome, "the slowly-fading mistress of the world." The "idolaters" referred to here are the heathen hordes from whom he freed Leodogran.

147. Note the play on the word "quick," used in two meanings. Cf. l. 695 for a similar play on the word "fire." For a play on "lost" see *Lancelot and Elaine*, l. 163. Note also the repetitions of the same root in different forms in "prove" and "proof." Cf. l. 1007. Both of these devices of style are frequent in Tennyson.

151. *Kitchen-knaves.* "Knave" originally meant, as here, only a boy servant.

152. *Across the bar.* Originally, as here, the counter over which food as well as drink was handed. The word has become restricted in meaning. Cf. "knave" above.

154. *A twelvemonth and a day.* A traditional expression for a full year.

157. *Villain.* Originally merely one of low birth, a serf: later one of ignoble character. Which is the meaning here?

176. *Still.* "Habitually" or "continually." Common in Elizabethan English. Addison says, "He is still afraid," meaning "always afraid."

181. *Were quickened.* Note the vivifying effect of words such as "quickened," "live," "kindled." In *Oenone* is a similar line,

> "And at their feet the crocus brake like fire."

185. *Camelot.* In a sketch found among Tennyson's papers is the following passage: "On the latest limit of the West, in the land

of Lyonesse, where save the rocky Isles of Scilly, all is now wild sea, rose the sacred Mount of Camelot. It rose from the deeps with gardens and bowers and palaces, and at the top of the mount was King Arthur's hall and the holy minster with the cross of gold." The city owed much of its beauty to Merlin (cf. ll. 296–302).

200. *Changeling out of Fairyland.* One story of Arthur's birth is that on the stormy night when Uther died "wailing for an heir," Merlin and Bleys had gone down to the ocean, had seen the swift coming and going of a magic ship, dragon-winged, and that then great waves alive with flame came rolling in to shore and the ninth one brought and dropped at Merlin's feet the naked babe destined to be Uther's heir.

202. *Merlin.* The great magician. He was a pupil of Bleys, but he soon so far surpassed his master that Bleys abandoned magic and spent his life writing the deeds of Merlin in a book. He was "the most famous man of all those times," he "knew the starry heavens," he had "built the king his havens, ships, and halls." But finally overcome by the wiles of Vivien, he told her the charm of woven paces and of waving hands, and she made immediate use of her knowledge to imprison him in a hollow oak, where he remained "lost to life and use and name and fame." The whole story is told in *Merlin and Vivien.*

207. *Arabian Sea.* This "may allude to the mediaeval notion that plunging into certain seas destroyed his sorceries; the Red Sea especially had this property, it was said." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of The King*, p. 86.)

212. *The Lady of the Lake.* She is represented as having an important relation to Arthur's career. She was present at his crowning. She made the sword, Excalibur, and gave it to him, her voice was heard when his marriage was solemnized, her statue stood over the great gate of his city, and at his death it was she who took again the great sword (*The Passing of Arthur*). But it is not easy to see what she actually does in the story that would justify the elaborate emblematic figure of her over the gate.

218. *Either.* Usually, "one of two taken indifferently"; here, "each of two."

219. *Sacred fish.* As the sword was the symbol of justice, and the censer, or incense, of holiness, so the fish is the emblem of Christ. It became so because the letters that make the Greek word for "fish," ΙΧΘΥΣ, were the initial letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ.

225. *Those three queens.* Cf. *The Coming of Arthur*, ll. 273–8:

> "Down from the casement over Arthur, smote
> Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,
> One falling upon each of three fair queens
> Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
> Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright,
> Sweet faces, who will help him at his need."

229. *Dragon-boughs.* Coiled tails of dragons. *Emblemings.* Symbolic representations.

236. *An ancient man.* Mèrlin. He was "an hundred winters old."

249. *Son, I have seen,* etc. Merlin refers to the effects of mirage, seen especially in the Straits of Messina, and superstitiously attributed to the fairy Morgana, and frequently known as the Fata Morgana.

271. *For an ye heard a music,* etc. Merlin purposely speaks in blind, allegorical fashion to Gareth.

The walls of Camelot were built, Merlin adds, to the music of fairy harps. The walls of Thebes were anciently believed to have thus arisen. Oenone says that the walls of Troy "rose slowly to a music slowly breathed."

280. *The Riddling of the Bards.* The ancient Celtic minstrels often worded their prophecies so that no definite meaning could be drawn from them. So, too, Merlin, when Bellicent questioned him concerning Arthur's birth, answered in "riddling triplets of old time." Much of Merlin's speech is intentionally vague in reference and imagery.

283–288. Note how the repetition of "mock" in various forms emphasizes the sense of mystery and unreality. There is a play on two meanings, "to make sport of" and "to deceive."

293. *She, nor I.* Is this grammatical?

298. *Did their days in stone.* Carved representations of great events.

312. *That long-vaulted hall.* This famous hall, built by Merlin, is described in lines 393–401, 650–60.

323. *Faith in their great King.* It is in this *Idyll* that the knighthood is seen in the full flower of its excellence, before sin has progressed far enough to maim and distort it. This fine scene, witnessed by Gareth in the great hall, with King Arthur on the throne, impressing his personality on his knights, a great leader with great followers, was but typical of what happened often in those days of the puissant Order. As king, Arthur is cool, calm, steady; judicial in temper, but sympathetic and generous; with confidence in the power of his knights to cleanse the world. The knights are loyal and obedient, eager for service, courageous, light-hearted, and hopeful.

327. *Uther.* A king of the Britons. He succeeded his brother Aurelius Ambrosius (or Emrys).

351. *Standeth seized of.* Is in possession of.

355. *Wreak me.* Avenge me.

359. *Sir Kay.* "The most ungentle knight" in Arthur's court. He is called the Thersites of the *Idylls.*

362. *Gyve and gag.* The reference is to the fetters with which scolding women were formerly tied into a chair called the cucking-stool, and to the iron muzzle (called a Branks or Gossip's Bridle) fastened to their heads.

376. *Mark.* A coward and a traitor. "Mark's way" was "to steal behind one in the dark." He was the husband of the beautiful Isolt of Britain, but treated her with great cruelty. In Malory he is fully described and there he is called "King Fox."

380. *Charlock.* A plant of the mustard species, a common pest in grain fields. It has yellow blossoms.

385–391. The messenger repeats thus in indirect form the message sent by Mark. In lines 384–9 the personal pronouns refer to Mark.

386. *Cousin.* Formerly used to mean any near relative. Tristram was the son of Mark's sister.

398. *Blazon'd.* Painted with heraldic devices.

422. *Lap him up in cloth of lead.* "Lap" meant "wrap" or "enfold"; "cloth of lead" is an allusion to the old custom of using sheet-lead for winding round corpses. In Malory, Bk. xxi., ch. xi., we read that when Guinevere was dead she was "wrapped in cered cloth of Raines . . . and after she was put in a web of lead, and then in a coffin of marble."

444. *Wan-sallow.* Sir Kay is described as having a sickly yellow color like that of plants the roŏts of which are diseased through some parasitic growth.

447. *God wot,* etc. Cf. Malory: "Into the kitchen I shall bring him, and there he shall have fat browis every day, that he shall be as fat by the twelvemonth end as a pork hog."

452. *Sleuth-hound.* "Slot-hound," i.e., a hound that follows the "slot" or track of the deer.

463. *Tut, an the lad were noble.* Cf. Malory: "I dare undertake he is a villain born and never will make man, for and he had come of gentlemen he would have asked of you horse and armour, but such as he is, so he asketh. And since he hath no name, I shall give him a name that shall be Beaumains, that is, Fair Hands."

489. *Tarns.* Mountain lakes. "The word tarn has no meaning with us, though our young poets sometimes use it. . . . But when you have seen one of those still, inky pools at the head of a silent, lonely Westmoreland dale, you will not be apt to misapply the word in future. Suddenly the serene shepherd mountain opens this black, gleaming eye at your feet, and it is all the more weird for having no eyebrow of rocks, or fringe of rush or bush." Burroughs: *Fresh Fields.* Cf. *Lancelot and Elaine,* ll. 34–55.

490. *Caer-Eryri's highest.* The summit of Mt. Snowdon, literally Snowdon (*Eryri*) Field (*Cae*) the "r" being euphonic. According to one story of the coming of Arthur he was found on *Caer-Eryri.*

492. *The Isle Avilion.* "The Isle of Apples." Cf. *The Passing of Arthur,* ll. 427–31, for description of the island valley. "Avilion" is the same as the "Avalon" in *The Palace of Art,* l. 107.

515. *So for a month.* In *Morte d'Arthur* he serves a full year.

524. *Ragged oval.* The boys mark out in the sand a rough outline of the lists at the tournaments.

528. *From Satan's foot*, etc. From hell to heaven, from despair to hope.

539. *The good mother*, etc. In *Morte d'Arthur* Arthur does not know who Gareth is, and it is not Arthur but Lancelot who makes him a knight.

571. *The lions.* Cf. l. 1186 and *Lancelot and Elaine*, l. 659.

575. *May-blossom.* The white hawthorn. Cf. l. 642 and l. 1054 and determine whether the month or the flower is meant in each case.

576. *Hawk-eyes.* Cf. Tennyson's *Rosalind*, "Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright."

586. *That best blood.* The wine of the sacrament, which represents the blood of Christ.

607. *Or a holy life.* She will become a nun.

619. *Morning-star*, etc. These three together make up the "Day" of the preceding line.

655. *Blowing.* Blossoming.

665. *A maiden shield.* A blank shield. See lines 402–7.

693. *Hath past his time.* He seems to be in his dotage.

729. *Foul-flesh'd agaric.* The agaric is a kind of mushroom.

731. *Shrew.* The shrew-mouse. The shrews usually have a musky odor, and in some of the larger kinds this scent is very strong.

739. *Shock'd.* Encountered in the conflict. An archaic use of the word.

742. *Shingle.* Coarse gravel.

749. *Unhappiness.* Bad luck on the part of Sir Kay.

777. *Gloomy-gladed.* Note how many of Tennyson's compounds are alliterative, as, foul-flesh'd, shoulder-slipt, crag-carven, sand-shores, green-glimmering, etc.

779. *Red eye of an eagle-owl.* The great horned owl. "The comparison between the pool gleaming red in the twilight, and the eye of an eagle-owl, burning round and bright in the darkness, may have the fault of being too uncommon to really illustrate the description, but it is a simile that an ornithologist can appreciate. Indeed, a book might be written on the bird-lore of Tennyson, as has been well done by Mr. Harting in the case of Shakespeare." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, p. 98.)

816. *Arthur's table.* Made by Merlin for Uther, and given by Uther to Leodogran, the father of Guinevere. Leodogran gave the table and the hundred knights to Arthur when Arthur married Guinevere. The table seated one hundred and fifty knights, and each seat belonged to a special knight, except one, which was known as the "Siege Perilous" and was reserved for that knight who should achieve the Holy Grail. What is usually meant by "Arthur's Round Table" is

a smaller table for his twelve favorite knights. A Round Table was common in all ages of chivalry. Edward III had one two hundred feet in diameter. (Cf. Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*.)

829. *A peacock in his pride.* A roasted peacock dressed in its full plumage was served at table only on the most important and magnificent occasions.

839. *Frontless.* Unabashed, shameless.

881. *Hers who lay among the ashes.* The reference is to Cinderella.

883. *Then to the shore*, etc. Mr. Elsdale interprets the serpent-river as a symbol of the stream of time, its three long loops being youth, old age, middle age. "The encounters in this pageant are alike clear, varied, brief, set each in its own fair landscape and the sound of the river accompanies them with warlike music. They are real enough but they are also allegorical. It is easy for the faith and boldness of youth to conquer the sins and troubles of the dawn of life; it is harder to slay those of its noonday; it is harder still to overcome those of its late afternoon." (Stopford Brooke: *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, p. 277.)

889. *Lent-lily.* The daffodil. So named because it flowers during Lent. The color was a favorite with Tennyson. Note his references to a "daffodil" sky.

908. *Avanturine.* A variety of feldspar spangled with mica used here merely as a symbol of flashing brightness.

939. *Central bridge.* In the center of the bridge.

971. *O morning star*, etc. The effect of Lynette's three songs is cumulative and they should be considered together. She had had a morning dream—and such dreams traditionally come true—that she should have a victorious champion that day, and much as she still reviled her knave-knight, her first song, and more strongly each succeeding one, was a joyous recognition of the fulfillment of her dream. Her allusions to nature are consonant to the number of the victories. After one victory she invokes a single star; after two victories her invocations are in sets of two each, the sun and the moon, flowers open and flowers shut, birds at morning and birds at evening; after three victories it is the trefoil (three-leaved clover) and the rainbow "with three colors."

977. *But thou begone*, etc. Note here and elsewhere the skill with which the narrated conversation is kept up. Of this poem Tennyson said, "'Gareth' is not finished yet. I left him off once altogether, finding him more difficult to deal with than anything excepting perhaps 'Aylmer's Field.' If I were at liberty, which I think I am not, to print the names of the speakers 'Gareth,' 'Linette' over the short snip-snap of their talk, and so avoid the perpetual 'said' and its varieties, the work would be much easier." (*Mem.* II. 113.)

1002. *The flower.* The dandelion. Cf. *The Poet*, stanzas 5 and 6.

1012. *Vizoring up.* He covered his face by closing the vizor or front part of his helmet.

1013. *Cipher face of rounded foolishness.* "Apparently the roundness denotes its coin-like shape, as this middle knight seems to symbolize the love of gold in middle age." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, p. 106.)

1048. *Rosemaries and bay.* Bay is the bay-laurel tree, sprigs and leaves of which were woven in crowns for conquerors. The rosemary was also an evergreen shrub. To garnish the boar's head with bays and rosemary was an old custom.

1067. *Wrapt in harden'd skins.* "Tennyson's representation of the Knight of the Evening Star is full of original thought. He is old and hard; he blows a hard and deadly note upon his horn. A storm-beaten, russet, many-stained pavilion shelters him. A grizzled damsel arms him in ancient arms. Beneath his arms a hardened skin fits close to his body. All is different from that which the commonplace imagination connects with the evening star." (Stopford Brooke: *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, p. 277.) Mr. Elsdale interprets the hardened skin covering the old man as the habits of a lifetime that become unalterable at last. Cf. the simile, ll. 1100–4.

1130. *"O trefoil."* The gentler and more poetic side of Lynette is not in the description of her in Malory. Mr. Stopford Brooke calls her "a fresh and frank young person, smart and thoughtless, quick-tongued, over-rude, over-bold, both with the King and with Lancelot, but honourable and pure of heart—the petulant and impatient type," and he thinks her imaginative songs inconsistent with the kind of abuse she heaped on Gareth. Mr. Van Dyke speaks of her as "brave, high-spirited, and lovable, but narrow-minded," "a society girl, a worshiper of rank and station." Do you agree with these estimates?

1163. *A narrow comb.* Sometimes written 'coomb.' It is the steep, narrow head of a valley.

1169. *Yon four fools.* The caitiff knights conquered by Gareth. Their foolish notion of posing as morning, noon, evening, and night and death, had come from their study of the figures carved on the rock.

1172. *Vexillary*, etc. Referring to the Latin words carved by the vexillary or standard-bearer of the second legion upon a cliff that overhangs the little river Gelt near Brampton in Cumberland.

1174. The five words mean, Morning Star, Noonday, Evening Star, Night, Death. Hence the names of the four caitiff knights.

1175. The five figures, one under each name, are emblems of Time chasing the Soul.

1184. *Error.* Used in its etymological sense of "wandering."

1255. *How sweetly smells*, etc. Of these lines Mrs. Tennyson wrote in her *Journal* for September 24, 1872: "His [Tennyson's]

lines on the honeysuckle in 'Gareth' were made on the lawn about the honeysuckle that climbs up the house at Aldworth."

1273. *Ramp*, etc. "In heraldry it [the lion] is a more conspicuous beast than even the ordinary familiarity with the armorial lion would lead the uninitiated to suppose, for . . it was once upon a time the *only* beast thought worthy to be worn on shields and helmets. Thus, kings of England, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Princes of Wales and Dukes of Normandy, Counts of Flanders, Earls of Arundel Lincoln, Leicester, Shrewsbury, Pembroke, Salisbury, and Hereford, all bore lions: indeed, up to the twelfth century, heraldic zoölogy begins and ends with the King of Beasts. . . . For the lion pure and simple, heraldry insists that it shall be 'rampant.' That attitude belongs to it as a matter of course." (Robinson: *The Poets' Beasts*, p. 22.)

1281. *Arthur's Harp.* Cf. *The Last Tournament*, ll. 332–3:

> "Dost thou know the star
> We call the Harp of Arthur up in Heaven?"

Mr. Littledale thinks the reference is to some star near enough to the Pole-star and Arcturus to form with them a triangle like a harp. The reference is, however, obscure. The knights evidently enjoyed playing with astronomical fancies. In *The Holy Grail* we read:

> " . . . and thro' the gap
> The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—
> For, brother, so one night, because they roll
> Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars."

The reference here is evidently to the Great Bear, or "The Dipper."

1282. *Counter motion.* The stars seemed to be moving in a direction opposite to that of the clouds.

1348. *Fleshless laughter.* A grinning skull.

1390. *And horrors only proven*, etc. The allegory may mean that Gareth found Love instead of Death (Littledale), or that Death, "apparently the most formidable antagonist of all, turns out to be no real foe, and his fall ushers in a happier day from underground" (Elsdale).

1392. *He.* Malory. The "he" in line 1394 is Tennyson.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

1. *Elaine the fair.* Note the epithets descriptive of Elaine throughout the poem, as gentle, meek, mild, pure, sweet, etc. Notice also the similes used in describing her, the lily, the wild-flower, the little helpless innocent bird, etc.

1–27. For this passage there was but a hint in Malory. Elaine on being questioned about the shield merely answers, "It is in my chamber covered with a case.

28. *How came the lily maid* etc. Notice that the story begins in the middle of things and then goes back for the needed explanation

36. *Tarn.* See *Gareth and Lynette*, l. 489, note.

39. *For here two brothers.* The story of the diamond is not in Malory. In the old romance the jousts are between King Arthur and the King of Scots on the one hand, and any who would come against them on the other.

65. *The heathen.* The Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain. Was this prophecy fulfilled?

75. *The place.* London.

73–101. The chief facts in these lines come without change from Malory.

106. *Myriad.* A favorite word with Tennyson, and used in the sense of one thing with many forms. Cf. line 169, "Myriad-wrinkled." In *Enoch Arden*, l. 579, we have "the myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl."

121. *Arthur, my lord*, etc. This analysis of Arthur's character is not in Malory. The coldness of Arthur and his absorption in his work as king are important elements in explaining Guinevere's failure to love him. "He cares not for me," she says. Nor does she ever seem to realize that he does love her until the end, when she says, "Let no one dream but that he loves me still." This whole passage should be read in connection with lines 607–68 in *Guinevere*. The lines 640–5,

> "I thought I could not breathe in that fine air,
> That pure severity of perfect light—
> I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found
> In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art
> Thou art the highest and most human too,
> Not Lancelot, nor another,"

designedly recall this passage in *Lancelot and Elaine*.

125. *Untruth.* Here means unfaithfulness.

130. *Vows impossible.* What is Merlin's view of these vows? (Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*, ll. 266–8.)

132. *He is all fault*, etc. Cf. the description of Maud, "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

210. *The maiden dreamt*, etc. A foreshadowing of the occurrence in lines 1225–9. So, too, is line 230.

235. *Full courtly, yet not falsely.* Cf. Gawain's "courtesy with a touch of traitor in it," line 635.

250. *His mood was often like a fiend.* Cf. the important passage in *The Holy Grail*, ll. 763–849.

260. *The great knight.* In this *Idyll* we are made to see the captivating personality of Lancelot, his grace and courtesy and kindliness, his generous recognition of worth in others, his great love for the queen, his reverence for King Arthur, his moods of melancholy and self-reproach.

270. *Suddenly speaking.* Lancelot quickly changes the subject because he does not wish to talk of Guinevere.

294. *Carved of one emerald.* "Tennyson seems to have been thinking of the famous 'Russian emerald' said to have been sent originally by Pilate to Tiberius. It is supposed to have the head of Christ carved upon it, but Mr. King (*The Gnostics*, p. 146) shows good cause against our accepting this as authentic. But the poet has taken the detail of the head on the cuirass from Spenser's Arthur:

'Athwart his brest a bauldrick brave he ware
That shined, like twinkling stars, with stones most pretious rare.
And in the midst thereof, one pretious stone,
Of wondrous worth, and else of wondrous mights,
Shapt like a Ladie's head, exceeding shone,' etc.

F. Q., I. vii. 29.

Spenser is too good a Protestant to say 'shapt like *our* Ladie's head'; he leaves that for the student of antiquities to discover." (Littledale: *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, p. 211.)

297. *The White Horse.* The emblem of the Saxons.

330. *As when a painter*, etc. Tennyson once asked Mr. Watts to describe his ideal of what a true portrait-painter should be, and these lines embody the substance of Mr. Watts's reply.

354. *Rapt.* "Seized with ecstasy," "enraptured." Cf. Milton, *Il Penseroso*: "thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes."

403. *In the white rock a chapel*, etc. This is the cave in which Lancelot was later, during his sickness. This beautiful description has as its germ Malory's "that hermitage which was under a wood, and a great cliff on the other side, and a fair water running under it."

422. *Pendragon.* A chief leader. Composed of two Welsh words, *pen*, "a head," and *dragon*, "leader."

423. *Talk mysteriously.* That is, they talk about the mystery of his birth.

433. *The golden dragon.* The golden dragon, adopted by Uther as the emblem of the Pendragonship, was retained by his son Arthur.

480. *As a wild wave.* Mr. Collins (*Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 146) says that this fine simile is "obviously borrowed from the *Iliad*, where it draws on three different similes." "Green-glimmering towards the summit" is, he admits, "Tennyson's own fine touch." But see the Letter-Diary kept by Tennyson on a trip to Norway in 1858: "Next day very fine, but in the night towards morning storm arose and our topmast was broken off. I stood next morning a long time by the cabin door and watched the green sea, looking like a mountainous country, far off waves with foam at the top looking like snowy mountains bounding the scene; one great wave, green-shining, past with all its crests smoking high up beside the vessel." (*Mem.* I. 428.)

555. *And Gareth.* In the first edition of the poem (1859) this read "And Lamorak." *Gareth and Lynette* was written later, and then the change in this line was made.

636. *And cast his eyes on fair Elaine.* The whole episode of Gawain's courtship of Elaine is added by Tennyson.

829. *Large black eyes.* Cf. *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 337, 384–5. Lancelot and Arthur were opposite types in personal appearance.

858. *Fine care.* Compare this use of "fine" with "so fine a fear," in line 592, "the fine Gawain," in line 1047, "fine" as used repeatedly in descriptions of Gareth (*Gareth and Lynette*, ll. 454–6), and "fine" and "fineness" in *Gareth and Lynette*, l. 466.

871. *His honor*, etc. Honor, truth, faithfulness to the queen mean dishonor, falseness, unfaithfulness to the king.

919. *Delay no longer, speak your wish.* Cf. Malory, Bk. xviii. chap. xix. The frankness with which ladies of mediaeval romance offered themselves in marriage to chosen knights made this a difficult passage to transfer into a poem so modern in general ethical tone as Tennyson's *Lancelot and Elaine*. "Elaine was exceedingly difficult to do with sufficient fineness of touch. Her innocent boldness might well have become unmaidenly. . . . She rises to the very verge of innocent maidenliness in passionate love, but she does not go over the verge. . . . It was as difficult to represent Elaine as to represent Juliet; and Tennyson has succeeded well where Shakespeare has succeeded beautifully. It is great praise, but it is well deserved." (Stopford Brooke: *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, p. 315.)

948. *Thrice your age.* Cf. l. 256. Why does he somewhat exaggerate his age? How old was Elaine at this time? Cf. l. 271.

982. *So in her tower*, etc. The chief facts in lines 982–1154 are from this passage in chap. xix., Bk. xviii. of Malory: "Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and ever she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten days, that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of this world, then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. And ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then she said, 'Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body I may complain me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man, and I take God to my record I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a pure maiden I am for him and for all other. And since it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the High Father of heaven to have mercy on my soul, and upon mine innumerable pains that I suffered may be allegiance of part of my sins. For sweet Lord Jesu,' said the fair maiden, 'I take thee to record, on thee I was never great offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight Sir Launcelot out of measure, and of myself, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love, wherefore I have my death.' And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir

Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she did endite it; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead.—'And while my body is hot let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter till that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my richest clothes, be laid with me in a chariot unto the next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barget be covered with black samite, over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done.' So her father granted it her faithfully all things should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, all was led the next way unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro, or any espied it."

A comparison of the passage just quoted from Malory and the lines in Tennyson would be an admirable study in his way of handling material. Note what Tennyson leaves out, what he changes, what he amplifies, what he condenses, what he adds.

995. *Sallow-rifted glooms of evening.* The yellowish streaks of light in the dark sky in the evening.

998. *The Song of Love and Death.* Stopford Brooke says of this song, "This is almost like a piece out of the sonnets of Shakespeare, full of his to-and-fro play with words that are thoughts, with the same kind of all-pervading emotion in the lines; the same truth to the situation and the character of the singer; and with Tennyson's deep-seated waters of love—which too rarely come to the surface—welling upwards in it."

1015. *The Phantom of the House.* The Banshee, a tutelary female spirit, supposed to give warning of death or danger. "Every chief family in Ireland has its banshee." (Brewer.)

1158. *Hard won.* Won with difficulty; *hardly won*—almost lost. Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*, l. 147, note.

1178. *Tawnier than the cygnets.* The plumage of the full-grown swan is pure white, but the cygnets, or the young swans, are grayish or brownish.

1187. *These as I trust*, etc. "These" is the object of believe. Note the repetitions. Cf. ll. 1197–8.

1217. *To her pearls.* Referring to Elaine's sleeve embroidered with pearls.

1418. *Not knowing*, etc. The repentance and death of Lancelot are described in full in Malory, xxi., chapters xi., xii. With the

"remorseful pain" of this last soliloquy of Lancelot should be read the important passage in *The Holy Grail* (ll. 763-849, 877-83) descriptive of his stormy search for the sacred cup, which he finally saw, but only "veiled and covered."

THE HOLY GRAIL

Tennyson's first four *Idylls* appeared in 1859. In that year he wrote to the Duke of Argyll, "As to Macaulay's suggestion of the Sangreal, I doubt whether such a subject could be handled in these days without incurring a charge of irreverence. It would be too much like playing with sacred things. The old writers *believed* in the Sangreal. Many years ago I did write 'Lancelot s Quest of the Grail' in as good verse as I ever wrote, no, I did not write, I made it in my head, and it has now altogether slipt out of memory." (*Memoirs* I, 456.) It was, in fact, nine years later that Tennyson wrote *The Holy Grail*. Mrs. Tennyson noted in her diary for 1868:

Sept. 9th. A. read me a bit of his "San Greal" which he has now begun.

Sept. 14th. He has almost finished the "San Greal" in about a week (he had seen the subject clearly for some time). It came like a breath of inspiration. I was pleased to think that the Queen and the Crown Princess wished him to write it. (*Mem.* II., 57.)

Hallam Tennyson also comments on the composition of *The Holy Grail:* "Of all the 'Idylls of the King,' 'The Holy Grail' seems to me to express most my father's highest self. Perhaps this is because I saw him in the writing of this poem more than any other, with that far-away rapt look on his face, which he had whenever he worked at a story that touched him greatly, or because I vividly recall the *inspired* way in which he chanted to us the different parts of the poem as they were composed." (*Mem.* II, 92.)

In November of the same year Tennyson read the completed poem to Browning (who in turn read part of his own new poem, *The Ring and the Book*), and Browning thought it Tennyson's "best and highest" work. (*Mem.* II, 59.)

The Holy Grail volume finally appeared in 1869.

5. *The cowl.* A monk's hood. It stands for Sir Percivale's life in the monastery as the helmet stands for his former life as a knight.

9. *Ambrosius.* The framework of the poem is a conversation between Sir Percivale, who had known courts and kings and the quest of great adventures, and Ambrosius, the simple-hearted, uneducated monk who knows only the monastery and the little

village adjoining. Mr. Stopford Brooke calls attention to the impression of unity given by this device to the various episodes of the story.

13. World-old yew-tree. In Mrs. Tennyson's journal for April, 1868, we read: "There has been a great deal of smoke in the yew-trees this year. One day there was such a cloud that it seemed to be a fire in the shrubbery." Tennyson's son adds this note: "It was then that he wrote the speech of Ambrosius, etc., in 'The Holy Grail' with the lines about this 'smoke'—that is, the pollen of the yew blown and scattered by the wind. . . . *In Memoriam,* Section XXXIX, was also written at this time." In the *In Memoriam* passage Tennyson speaks of the "fruitful cloud and living smoke" of the yew-tree. "World-old," appropriately indicates the possible great age of yew-trees. Wordsworth in *Yew-trees* speaks of a certain tree in Larton Vale as having furnished wood for weapons at the time of Crecy (1346); and traditionally yew-trees were much older than that.

21. *The pale.* The monastery bounds.

46. *The cup* (supposed to be of emerald) from which Christ drank at his last supper with his disciples. Joseph was a rich member of the Sanhedrim at the time of the crucifixion. After the crucifixion he is said to have been in prison forty-two years, but it seemed only three because he had the Grail with him. Tradition also reports that on his release by Vespasian he carried the Grail to Britain and built the abbey of Glastonbury (see also note on *Sir Galahad,* p. 403.) The oldest portion of the Abbey of Glastonbury (in Somerset, twenty-one miles south of Bristol) is the chapel of St. Joseph. It is said that when Joseph was there he planted his staff, which took root and became "the Glastonbury thorn" that bursts into leaf on Christmas eve. Arimathea (or Aromat) is a town in Judea, but of undetermined location.

49. *The day of darkness.* Matthew 27:45-53.

61. *Arviragus.* In Stow's *Chronicle* is the statement that "Aruigagus raigned 28 years," or from 44 to 72 A. D.

63. *Wattles.* Interwoven branches or twigs.

135. *Galahad.* Sir Galahad's youth, beauty, stainless purity, and his mystical absorption in the spiritual life along with knightly deeds against the heathen had been foreshadowed by Tennyson in *Sir Galahad* thirty-four years before the writing of the *Holy Grail.* See note, p. 403.

150. *That wealth of hair.* In Malory XVII, vii, Percivale's sister says, "Lo lords, here is a girdle that ought to be set about the sword. And wit ye well the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well while that I was a woman of the world. But as soon as I wist that this

adventure was ordained me I clipped off my hair, and made this girdle in the name of God."

172. *The Siege Perilous.* Merlin's magic chair. "Siege" is from the Latin *sedere*, to sit, and means a "seat." The knights evidently thought that Merlin died through inadvertently sitting in this chair. According to the romances he was left spellbound by Vivien in the tangled branches of a thorn tree, where he still sleeps. See Tennyson's version at the close of *Merlin and Vivien.* In Malory (III, iv; XI, i; XIII, iv) the chair was prepared for Galahad and his name was inscribed on it. The old knight led the youth to the chair and said, "Wit ye well that place is yours," and Galahad sat down forthwith in the assigned chair. In Tennyson's version it required great courage for Galahad to seat himself in the chair immediately after Merlin's misadventure. The allegorical meaning of the Siege Perilous is not clear. Tennyson explained it as "the perilous seat which stands for the spiritual imagination." (*Works, Alfred Lord Tennyson,* Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 492.) Mr. Elsdale calls it "the chair of knowledge." Mr. Littledale "the temptations of 'sense.'" Whatever the exact meaning, the chair certainly represents some supreme test of spiritual character and attainment, a test which Galahad alone can successfully undergo. He recognizes clearly the danger involved in this final step in his preparation for the Quest of the Grail, but he is willing to risk all in order to perfect himself for his task. Tennyson's phrase, "If I lose myself, I save myself," is based on Matthew 10:39.

232. *Zones of sculpture.* The zones of sculpture are on the outside of the hall. The significance of the sculpture is characteristic of Tennyson. He had a "splendid faith in the growing purpose of the sum of life." (*Mem.* I, 300.) "The four zones represent human progress: the savage state of society; the state where man lords it over the beast; the full development of man; the progress towards spiritual ideals." (*Works, Alfred Lord Tennyson,* Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 493.) Compare *By an Evolutionist* and *In Memoriam,* CXVIII.

273. *His face darken'd.* The Quest of the Grail typified pursuit of spiritual excellence, but Arthur disapproves of it because he sees that the Quest is untimely. His knights are not yet prepared for this quest. They are trying to "grow wings" before they have completed the third stage of progress. In so perfectly attuned a nature as that of Galahad or that of the holy nun the vision had its place, but most of those who had taken the vow were not fitted to pursue the Quest and the work for which they were fitted, to conquer wrong and violence, to do noble deeds, to save the realm, would go undone. It is a

tragic moment for Arthur when he perceives that their mistaken zeal is certain to destroy the Round Table.

300. *Taliessin.* A Cymric bard said to have lived in the sixth century. His name became a synonym for bardic poetry.

312. *Strong White Horse.* "The white horse was the emblem of the English or Saxons, as the raven was of the Danes, and as the dragon was of the Britons." (*Works, Alfred Lord Tennyson,* Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 476.) The White Horse near Wantage, Berkshire, England, is ascribed to Alfred. It is a rude figure of a horse made by cutting away the turf on the Chalk Downs. The White Horse of Uffington in Berkshire covers about an acre of ground.

332. *Camelot.* A legendary spot in England.

347. See note on l. 350.

350. *Wyvern,* etc. These are all heraldic emblems of the old kings who built Camelot. The "wyvern" was a two-legged dragon with wings and with tail tied in a knot and barbed. The "griffin" was half lion and half eagle.

361. *And I was lifted up,* etc. See "Introduction," pp. 53-54. Percivale fails first because of undue self-confidence; then because he dwells too intently on his own sins. In each case he is an egoist. He makes himself and not the Quest the center of his thoughts. Hence the hermit (l. 445) tells him he has not true humility.

379-390. The gratification of the senses brings Percivale no delight.

391-400. "Nor does wifely love and the love of the family."

401-420. "Nor does wealth that is worshipt by labour."

421-439. "Nor does glory."

421-439. "Nor does fame." (*Works, Arthur Lord Tennyson,* Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 494.)

453. *The gray-hair'd wisdom.* The Magi.

462. *Sacring.* Consecration.

466. *The fiery face,* etc. "And then the bishop made semblaunt as though he would have gone to the sacring of the mass. And then he took an ubblie, which was made in likeness of bread. And at the lifting up their came a figure in likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into the bread, so that they all saw it." (Malory. *Morte D'Arthur,* XVII, xx.)

477. *Shattering all evil customs,* etc. The Holy Grail always goes with Galahad, but it does not send him to the silent life in the monastery. In stanza one of *Sir Galahad* as here we find emphasis on his good blade and tough lance and his great powers against pagan hordes.

489-539. Tennyson considered this passage and Lancelot's Quest, ll. 763-849, "as among the best blank verse he had written."

540-563. "Tennyson would also call attention to the babbling homely utterances of the village priest Ambrosius as a contrast to the sweeping passages of blank verse that set forth the visions of spiritual illumination." (*Works, Arthur Lord Tennyson*, Ed. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. III, p. 495.)

545. *Breviary.* A book containing the prayers and offices for the canonical hours.

547. *Thorpe.* Village.

569. *Eft.* A small lizard.

612. *Yule.* On Christmas Eve the Yule-log was brought into the house and put into the fireplace with great ceremony. The word "Yule" stands here for the lavish fires at Christmas time, and so for any kind of abundant, rich life as opposed to the meagerness of the ordinary life of the monks.

661. *Paynim.* Pagan. The reference is to the Druidic circles.

667. *A mocking fire.* These pagans were fire-worshipers and they ridiculed the Quest of Bors, saying there was no fire to worship except the sun.

679. *Scud.* Light vapory clouds or ocean foam driven before the wind.

681. *Seven clear stars.* In *The Princess* we read:

> "Till the Bear had wheel'd
> Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns."

The reference is to the constellation of the Great Bear which the knights call the Table Round because it describes a circle in heaven round the polar star. (Part IV, 194.)

714, 715. *On heaps of ruins*, etc. Showing how the city had gone to decay in the absence of the knights. *Basilisk:* a fabulous crowned serpent whose look killed. *Cockatrice:* a winged snake in heraldry. *Talbots:* heraldic dogs.

737. *Gawain.* For further references to Gawain, see *Holy Grail*, ll. 202, 851-868, *The Coming of Arthur*, ll. 243, 319-320, and *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 30-57.

759. *Cana in Holy Writ.* John 2:10.

810. *Carbonek.* According to some accounts, "Carbonek was the name of the castle where Pelles lived and kept the Holy Grail." Rhys: *The Arthurian Legends*, p. 305.

862. *Blue-eyed cat.* Male albino cats are frequently blue-eyed and deaf.

871. *These have seen*, etc. The five persons who saw the Grail were the Holy Nun, Galahad, Percivale, Lancelot, and

Bors. Note the striking difference between these visions, especially between that of the nun and that of Lancelot.

884-898. Arthur sums up the outcome of the Quest. Not a tithe of the knights have returned. The greatest of all, Lancelot, will hardly believe what he saw. Percivale saw it afar off and now will retire into a monastery, and Galahad has passed into the spiritual city. These three have succeeded in whole or in part, but they have left human wrongs to right themselves.

899-915. "The Holy Grail is one of the most imaginative of my poems. I have expressed there my strong feeling of the Reality of the Unseen. The end, where the King speaks of his work and of his visions, is intended to be the summing up of all in the highest note by the highest of human men. These three lines in Arthur's speech (ll. 911-913) are the (spiritually) central lines of the Idylls."

907. *And many a time they come.* The truest visions come not when being deliberately sought, but as the inevitable flashing forth of truth in the midst of struggle and experience. In *Silas Marner,* George Eliot gives Dolly Winthrop her glimpse of spiritual truth when she is "leechin' and poulticin'." Browning's David comes to a knowledge of the true nature of service only when human might has been taxed to the utmost in his attempt to save Saul. In Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal* and Ruskin's *King of the Golden River,* and Van Dyke's *The Other Wise Man,* we have the same idea that spiritual wisdom and vision come from human love and service rather than from ascetic seclusion. In *St. Simeon Stylites* and *The Palace of Art* we find the inevitable failure of selfish efforts for personal, spiritual, or intellectual advancement separate from obvious human needs.

908. *Until this earth.* Cf. *The Ancient Sage,* ll. 229-239, where Tennyson again describes a state of consciousness in which there is apparent isolation of the spirit from the body, and an accompanying marvellous clearness and strength of mental vision. Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey* attributes to nature the power of bringing one into a blessed and serene mood:

> "Until the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

912. *When he feels he cannot die.* Cf. *Introduction,* p. 50, and note on l. 11 of Prologue to *In Memoriam.* See also *Wages, Crossing the Bar, In Memoriam,* and *The Ancient Sage* for

varying phases of the doctrine of Immortality. Cf. Shelley's *Adonais* in which immortality of influence, pantheistic immortality, and personal immortality, all receive at least temporary, poetic credence.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

6. *Their march to westward.* After the discovery of the guilt of Lancelot and the queen, they fled, he to his own land, and she to the nunnery at Almesbury. Arthur went to fight against Lancelot, and during the absence of the king, Modred usurped the throne. Arthur then marched against him, stopping at Almesbury on the way for a last interview with Guinevere. The night described here is the night before the battle.

9. *I found Him*, etc. While God's ways in the world of nature seem clear enough, His dealings with men seem full of mystery and contradiction. Arthur has devoted his life to God's service, yet he feels now that God has forgotten him. The three things which meant most to him, his kingdom, his wife, and his friend, have failed him in the end. Compare these sad words with his earlier hopes. His knights he had counted the "fair beginners of a nobler time." Of Guinevere he had said:

> "But were I joined with her
> Then might we live together as one life,
> And reigning with one will in everything
> Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
> And power on this dead world to make it live."

His word to Lancelot had been:

> "Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death."

And now his realm was "reeling back into the beast," he had said farewell to his wife, he had fought with his friend. On the night before the enforced battle with his own knights he faces the thought of death. There is no touch of hope in the sad soliloquy until we come to the exclamation in the last line (l. 28).

31. *The ghost of Gawain.* In Dante's *Inferno*, Canto V., the punishment of carnal sinners is described as follows: "The infernal hurricane that never rests carries along the spirits . . . ; whirling and smiting it molests them . . . hither, thither, down, up it carries them; no hope ever comforts them, not of repose, but even of less pain." (Charles Eliot Norton's translation.)

35. *Isle of rest.* Avilion. A prophecy of Arthur's death.

69. *The Roman wall.* The wall built by the Romans to protect the northern frontier of their British province from the Picts, barbarians inhabiting the northern part of Britain (now Scotland).

81. *Lyonesse.* Supposed to have stretched from Cornwall to Scilly, but later to have been submerged.

90. *That day.* At the winter solstice. The romance says, "On a Monday after Trinity Sunday."

95. *A death-white mist.* Throughout this passage the mist, the "shroud of death-white fog," not only makes the actual conflict chaotic and wantonly disastrous, but likewise symbolizes the doubt and confusion in Arthur's soul. It is important to observe how the mist is inwoven with the battle. Each little climax in the description ends with the mist.

129. *The wan wave*, etc. In this passage the ocean becomes almost a sentient element in the way it adds to the misery of Arthur. Its cruel indifference, its pitiless suggestions of "days of old and days to be," intensify the mental confusion that has fallen upon the king.

170. *So all day long.* From this point to line 440 we have Tennyson's early poem of *Morte d'Arthur*.

199. *Clothed in white samite.* Cf. ll. 312, 327. The line recurs like a refrain.

214. *In the moon*, etc. The fine effects of moonlight through this poem are due entirely to Tennyson.

352. *He heard*, etc. Note the sharp, metallic sounds of this passage.

365. *Black-stoled.* Clad in long, loose black robes reaching to the feet.

366. *Three Queens.* Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*, ll. 224–6, and note.

367. *Shiver'd to the tingling stars.* Is this extravagant speech justified?

390. *Not like that Arthur.* All the splendor and hope in *The Coming of Arthur* is brought by this comparison to intensify the desolation and sadness of the present.

434. *Like some full-breasted swan.* Cf. Shakespeare:

> "Pale swan in her watery nest
> Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending."

And Byron (*Isles of Greece*):

> "There swan-like let me sing and die."

As a matter of fact swans have most discordant notes, and they do not sing their own elegy. But the literary convention concerning the swan has the sanction of antiquity and has a poetic significance.

MARIANA

[First published in 1830. Not much changed in succeeding editions.]

The suggestion for this poem came from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, III. i. 216–81. Mariana is a lady who had been betrothed to Angelo, but, on the loss of her dowry, had been deserted by him. Five years had elapsed since she had seen him, but she still "wore lamentation" for his sake. The Duke says of her, "At the moated grange resides this dejected Mariana." In Act IV. sc. i. she speaks of her continued grief, and gives a little picture of herself as "sitting here all day" in the lonely house. From such hints Tennyson built up the poem. Mr. Walters in *In Tennyson Land* gives an elaborate

description of an old farmhouse near Somersby and known as "the grange," and identifies it as the building from which Tennyson made his study. But the poet says (*Mem.* I. 4), "The Moated Grange is an imaginary house in the fen. I never so much as dreamed of Baumber's farm as the abode of Mariana."

1. *Flower-plots.* Tennyson, at the beginning of his work, had "an absurd antipathy," he tells us, to the use of the hyphen, so he wrote all compounds as one word. (*Mem.* I. 50.) In this poem he wrote "flowerplots," "marishmosses," "casementcurtain," "thickmoted," etc. There were other archaisms in these early poems (1830, 1833), such as elisions and accented final syllables in past participles. For instance, he wrote "up an' away" (l. 50), "i' the pane" (l. 63), "gnarl'd" (l. 42). But in the revision of 1842 he returned to ordinary modes of expression.

18. *Did trance.* Cf. "*did* mark" (l. 43), "*did* all confound" (l. 76), as examples of the poetical past indefinite tense. This device is sometimes used with fine effect, as in the lines quoted, but often the "do" or "did" is but a weak way of filling out a line.

26. *Night-fowl.* Were it not for the fact that the cock is mentioned in line 27, the crowing of the night-fowl would naturally be interpreted as the "crowing of the cock." Possibly the reference is to the "night-crow," a bird traditionally ranking with the raven, the bat, and the owl, as a bird of ill omen. Mr. Van Dyke suggests that it may be the cry of water-fowl passing over in the night.

31. *Gray-eyed.* A traditional epithet for morning.

40. *Marish-mosses.* Marsh-mosses, mosses growing on low, wet ground.

41. *Poplar.* The white poplar, the leaves of which are white on one side and green on the other, and are in continual agitation. The bark of the lower part of the trunk is dark and furrowed.

43. *Mark.* "Dark" was the early reading. Why did he change it?

63. *The blue fly,* etc. The silence of the house is emphasized by the description of noises usually unnoticed. For this passage compare *Maud,* I. vi. 68–74:

> "Living alone in an empty house,
> Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
> Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
> And the shrieking rush of the wainscot-mouse,
> And my own sad name in corners cried,
> When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
> About its echoing chambers wide."

And this from *Guinevere,* ll. 69–72:

> "In the dead night, grim faces came and went
> Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
> Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
> Heard by the watcher in a haunted house."

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

[First printed in 1830. Only slight verbal changes in succeeding editions.]

"The matter of the poem and the imagery are, of course, simply transferred from the gorgeous description of Harun al Rashid's Garden of Gladness in the story of Nur-al-din Ali and the damsel Anis al Talis, 'Thirty-Sixth-Night.'" (Collins: *Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 28.) This is an interesting poem to study for the richness of its sense impressions. The moonlight journey (stanzas 2–10) has four parts, on the river, on the canal, on the lake, in the garden. Can you re-create in detail the poet's pictures? Explain, for instance, the position of the central fountain in stanza 5. Also l. 4 of stanza 4.

The poem gives the impression of an abundance of trees, shrubs, flowers. Note every word or phrase contributing to this effect. Study all the appeals to the eye by color, form, or motion. Are all the facts so noted appropriate in a moonlight picture? How much of the charm of the picture comes through sound? Note how rich are the impressions from odor. Study stanzas 2–10 for the purpose of observing all the elements of the picture that betray the hand of man. In what way is the song of the nightingale a climax in the impressions made by the scene?

Note the large number of compound words. Originally they were written without the hyphen, as one word.

THE POET

[First published in 1830. Slight changes in succeeding editions.]

It is interesting to compare Tennyson's conception of the grandeur of a poet's destiny with the utterances of other poets on the same theme. Take, for instance, Wordsworth's account of his call to poetry, when he felt that "vows were made for him," that he was "a dedicated spirit, else sinning greatly" (*Prelude*, iv. 319-38), and his final summary of his mission as a poet (*Recluse*, ll. 664-703). Cf. also Shelley's *Skylark:*

> "Like a poet hidden
> In the light of thought,
> Singing hymns unbidden
> Till the world is wrought
> To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

Shelley also represents the poet as "the companionless Sensitive Plant," whose dower is a deep heart full of love, and a longing for the beautiful. In *Adonais* the passion-winged thoughts of the poet are represented as wandering from "kindling brain to brain" and with power to

> "pierce the guarded wit
> And pass into the panting heart beneath
> With lightning and with music."

3. *Dower'd with*, etc. An ambiguous expression. Does it mean that he hated hatred, scorned scorn, loved love, or does it mean that the poet had hatred, scorn, and love in quintessence? The second meaning is more subtle, but passages in Tennyson's *Memoir* would lead one to infer that he had the first meaning in mind. "Tennyson was very grand on contemptuousness. It was, he said, a sure sign of intellectual littleness. . . . It is a little or immature or uneducated mind that readily despises." (Wilfred Ward's *Talks with Tennyson*, quoted in *Mem.* II. 380.) The Duke of Argyle in describing a walk with Tennyson says, "He suddenly stopped, turned round, confronted me, and said, 'I hate scorn,' with an emphasis which showed how deep-seated in his nature that hatred was."

13. *Indian reeds.* "Blowpipes such as the South American Indians use for shooting arrows." (Van Dyke: *Poems of Tennyson*, p. 430.)

15. *Calpe unto Caucasus.* From Gibraltar to the Caucasus Mountains, conventional eastern and western limits of the ancient world.

19. *Field flower.* The dandelion.

39. *Rites and forms.* Was this Tennyson's later attitude towards "rites and forms"? Cf. *Intro.*, p. 45.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

[First published in 1833. Greatly revised in 1842.]

This poem was suggested by an Italian romance upon the *Donna di Scalotta*, in which Camelot, unlike the Celtic tradition, was placed near the sea. (Palgrave: *Lyrical Poems by Lord Tennyson*, p. 257.) The legend reappears in the *Idylls of the King* as the story of Elaine, the maid of Astolat.

As to the comparative value of the two versions of this poem, that of 1833 and that of 1842, there has been considerable difference of opinion. In the review by Spedding in the *Edinburgh* (April, 1843), we read: "The poems originally published in 1832 are many of them largely altered; generally with great judgment, and always with a view to strip off redundancies, to make the expression simpler and clearer, to substitute thought for imagery and substance for shadow. 'The Lady of Shalott,' for instance, is stripped of all her finery: her pearl garland, her velvet bed, her royal apparel, and her blinding diamond bright, are all gone; and certainly in the simple white robe which she now wears, her beauty shows to much greater advantage." (*Mem.* I. 191.) Mrs. Fanny Kemble, on the other hand, in the *Democratic Review* (January, 1844), took the ground that all the revisions were for the worse. The following quotations from the poem of 1833 give the passages in which the revision was most radical. Do any of these passages justify Mrs. Kemble's opinion? Or are they all inferior to the revised form as you have it in your text?

Lines 6–12 were,

"The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
Round about Shalott.

"Willows whiten, aspens shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever," etc.

Lines 19–35 were,

"Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly
O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

"The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed
With roses: by the marge unhailed
The shallop flitteth silkensailed,
Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearlgarland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparellèd,
The Lady of Shalott."

Part II. began,

"No time hath she to sport and play;
A charmèd web she weaves alway.
A curse is on her, if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day,
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

"She lives with little joy or fear.
Over the water, running near,
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
Reflecting towered Camelot.
And as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls," etc.

Following the first stanza in Part IV. was this stanza, entirely omitted in later versions,

"A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew (her zone in sight,
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright).
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
Though the squally east wind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott."

The third stanza of Part IV. began as follows,

"With a steady, stony glance—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Beholding all his own mischance,
Mute, with a glassy countenance—
She looked down to Camelot.
It was the closing of the day," etc.

The four closing stanzas are as here given:

"As when to sailors while they roam,
By creeks and outfalls far from home,
Rising and dropping with the foam,
From dying swans wild warblings come,
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
Still as the boathead wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her chanting her deathsong,
The Lady of Shalott.

"A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
And her smooth face sharpened slowly,
Turned to towered Camelot." etc.

"Under tower and balcony,
By gardenwall and gallery,
A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
Deadcold between the houses high,
Dead into towered Camelot.

"Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
To the planked wharfage came:
Below the stern they read her name,
'The Lady of Shalott.'

"They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest,
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
The wellfed wits at Camelot.
'The web was woven curiously,
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not—this is I,
The Lady of Shalott.'"

In other portions of the poem the changes were slight. Part III. is very nearly as in the original version.

7. *Where the lilies blow.* Note that in the earlier version the daffodilly was associated with the waterlily. Is the daffodil a water plant?

11. *Little breezes dusk and shiver.* Mrs. Kemble on this line says, "Little breezes *dusking* do what we do not understand, and *shivering* do what they make other people do." Do you agree with this criticism? Do you prefer the original line,

"The sunbeam-showers break and quiver"?

20. *Slide the heavy barges.* Mrs. Kemble calls this "a canal-like image." Do you prefer the picture of the "rose-fence"?

24. *But who hath,* etc. Of these three lines Mr. Van Dyke says, "Instead of a luscious description of a garden and apparel, he gives us the contrast between the outer world of activity and the Lady's self-centered solitude."

30. *Echoes.* Which is preferable, the "echoes" or the "like an angel" of the earlier version?

38. *A magic web.* The web is the life of fancy in which the young girl lives. In the magic mirror are shows of life, suggestive and interesting, but remote.

69. *Or when the moon.* Tennyson called these lines the key to the symbolism of the tale. "The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities." (*Mem.* I. 117.) But the explanation does not seem to be very clear. It does not, indeed, seem necessary to find an allegorical meaning for a poem so purely fanciful. We may surely read the poem for "its sweet and dreamy melancholy."

78. *A red-cross knight.* A reminiscence of Spenser's knight in the first book of the *Faerie Queene.*

147. *Till her blood.* In the earlier version this is, "and her smooth face sharpened slowly." Which line do you prefer as descriptive of death?

168. *But Lancelot.* Note the dignity and pathos of this close compared with the colloquial character of the original.

THE PALACE OF ART

When Trench and Tennyson were at Trinity together, Trench said one day in conversation, "Tennyson, we can not live in art." This is the germ from which the poem grew. It was written by April 10, 1832. (See letter by Arthur Hallam, *Mem.* I. 85.) It was first published in the volume of 1832–3. The poem was altered so much before 1842 as to be nearly re-written. Tennyson greatly disliked variorum readings. He said that for himself many passages in Wordsworth and other poets had been entirely spoiled by the modern habit of giving every various reading along with the text. Of his own poems he said that he gave the people of his best, and that he wished that best might be unaccompanied by "the chips of the workshop."

"Why do they cherish the rubbish I shot from my full-finish'd cantos?" he asked. (*Mem.* I. 118.) Yet in Tennyson's poetry the comparison of early and later versions of a poem is one certain way of feeling his power as an artist. Stopford Brooke (*Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life,* p. 85) says of *The Palace of Art,* "As we read it in the volume of 1833, it has many weak lines. So far as com-

position goes, it is often all awry. . . . But as we read it in the volume of 1842, when it had received eight years of recasting and polishing, it is one of the most perfect of Tennyson's poems. To compare the first draft of this poem with the second, is not only to receive a useful lesson in the art of poetry—it is also to understand, far better than by any analysis of his life, a great part of Tennyson's character: his impatience for perfection, his steadiness in pursuit of it, his power of taking pains, the long intellectual consideration he gave to matters which originated in the emotions, his love of balancing this and that form of his thought against one another, and when the balancing was done, the unchangeableness of his acceptance of one form and of his rejection of another: and, finally, correlative with these qualities, his want of impulse and rush in song, as in life—English, not Celtic at all." In the space here at command only the more important variations can be given.

The poem is an allegory, and frankly didactic. It is Tennyson's protest against what he called the "Art heresy." The poem is "the embodiment of his belief that the Godlike life is with man and for man." (*Mem.* I. 118.) Cf. *Intro.*, p. 52. It is not known to whom the blank verse dedication was addressed. "For you are an artist" was the reading of line 2 in 1832, but this was changed afterward to the more general form.

7. *Level.* In 1832, "great broad." Why is "level" preferable?

15. *While Saturn whirls.* "The shadow of Saturn thrown upon the bright ring that surrounds the planet appears motionless, though the body of the planet revolves. Saturn rotates on its axis in the short space of ten and a half hours, but the shadow of this swiftly whirling mass shows no more motion than is seen in the shadow of a top spinning so rapidly that it seems to be standing still." (Rowe and Webb, quoted by Collins: *The Early Poems of Tennyson*, p. 86.)

54–56. In the earlier version,

> "That over-vaulted grateful glooms
> Roofed with thick plates of green and orange glass
> Ending in stately rooms."

Why should these lines be changed?

65–68. In the earlier version,

> "Some were all dark and red, a glimmering land
> Lit with a low round moon,
> Among brown rocks a man upon the sand
> Went weeping all alone."

Why is the revised picture so much more beautiful?

69–80. The three beautiful pictures in these lines were added in 1842.

81–84. In 1833 the stanza read,

> "One seemed a foreground black with stones and slags,
> Below sun-smitten icy spires
> Rose striped with long white cloud the scornful crags,
> Deep trenched with thunder fires."

61–84. All but two of these pictures are purely English in tone. The fifth is a southern picture; the sixth is reminiscent of mountain travel in Spain or Switzerland. Note that each picture is perfect in four lines, and that in so restricted a compass all needed details are nevertheless given so that a painter could hardly make the effect clearer. This power of making complete, highly-finished yet highly-suggestive pictures in a few lines was one of Tennyson's especial accomplishments in poetry, and no one had done it in the same fashion before him.

94. *Tracts of pasture.* In 1833 "yellow pasture." Which do you prefer?

99. *St. Cecily.* The patron saint of music, particularly of church music. She is usually represented in art as playing on some musical instrument, or as looking up toward an angel drawn down from heaven by the music of the saint. The name is ordinarily written "St. Cecilia." See pictures by Raphael and Rubens.

102. *Houris.* According to the Moslem faith the Houris are beautiful maidens who will be in paradise as companions of true believers. The Moslems are also called Islamites. The word in the next line refers to Mahomet, the founder of the Moslem faith.

111. *Ausonian.* An old name for Italy. The picture is of Numa Pompilius, the reputed second king of Rome, and the nymph Egeria, who instructed him in matters of state and religion.

115. *Cama.* Camadeo, the Cupid or God of Love of the Hindoos.

117. *Europa.* A sister of Cadmus. She was carried to Delphi by Zeus, who had taken upon himself the form of a white bull. Which do you prefer, line 117 as it stands or the form of 1833,

"Europa's scarf blew in an arch, unclasped"?

121. *Ganymede.* A beautiful Trojan youth carried to Olympus by the eagle of Zeus, and made immortal. He became cup-bearer to the gods.

126. *Caucasian.* "The Caucasian range forms the north-west margin of the great tableland of Western Asia, and as it was the home of those races who afterwards peopled Europe and Western Asia and so became the fathers of civilization and culture, the 'Supreme Caucasian mind' is a historically correct but certainly recondite expression for the intellectual flower of the human race, for the perfection of human ability." (Collins: *Early Poems of Tennyson*, p. 91.)

128. After this series of paintings it was in Tennyson's original plan to introduce a series of sculptures, but he found it the most difficult of all things to devise a statue in verse. (*Mem.* I. 119.) He completed but two sculptures. One of them was the following description of Elijah:

"One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,
As when he stood on Carmel-steeps
With one arm stretch'd out bare, and mock'd and said,
'Come, cry aloud, he sleeps.'

"Tall, eager, lean and strong, his cloak wind-borne
Behind, his forehead heavenly bright
From the clear marble pouring glorious scorn,
Lit as with inner light."

133–140. This passage was, in 1833,

"There deep-haired Milton like an angel tall
Stood limnèd, Shakespeare bland and mild,
Grim Dante pressed his lips, and from the wall
The bald blind Homer smiled."

In few passages is the revision a more striking improvement. Notice in detail the changed effect of the portraits of Milton, Dante, and Homer. Do you think the epithets "bland and mild" so apt for Shakespeare that no change was needed? In *To W. C. Macready* Tennyson speaks of Shakespeare's "bland and universal eye."

137. *The Ionian father.* Homer, the great Greek poet. He wrote in the Ionic dialect.

137–164. All of this was added in 1842.

149–156. A picture of the state of society in France during the French Revolution.

160. In the version of 1833 were three stanzas descriptive of the banquet the soul enjoyed. It was made up of "flavorous fruits," "ambrosial pulps and juices," "musk-scented blooms," "chalices of curious wine," and served in golden baskets, costly jars, and embossed salvers. In 1842 this was omitted as putting too much emphasis on the sensuous.

163. *Verulam.* Lord Bacon is classed with Plato as "first of those who know." "Dante (*Inf.* iv. 131) applies the phrase to Aristotle,—'il maestro di color che sanno.'" (Collins: *Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 44.) The epithet *Large-brow'd* was suggested by Nollekens's bust in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. (Palgrave: *Lyrical Poems by Lord Tennyson*, p. 248.)

165. *Motion*, etc. In their mental activity they were original, and they led the way to new conceptions.

171. *Memnon.* A colossal statue near Thebes. It was said to emit music when the rays of the morning sun struck it. It was attributed to Memnon, the son of Aurora.

174. *Her low preamble.* "The nightingale with long and low preamble," is a line in a sonnet of 1831. Hallam said the image was "worth an estate in Golconda." (*Mem.* I. 80.) It is the male nightingale who sings. Cf. l. 95 of *The Gardener's Daughter*. Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare, and many modern poets, as Cowper, Shelley, Keats, make the singing nightingale female. This false ornithology probably grew out of the story of the girl Philomela, who, in Greek myth, was changed into a nightingale.

176. *Throb thro'.* "She hears her voice echoing through the vaulted rooms." (Rolfe: *Select Poems of Tennyson*, p. 220.)

185. After this line in 1833 stood

"She lit white streams of dazzling gas."

"This was written when the use of gas for illuminating purposes was new, and not considered unromantic. When the Palace was remodeled the gas was turned off and the supper was omitted." (Van Dyke: *The Poetry of Tennyson*, "*The Palace of Art.*")

193–204. Added in 1851. "These lines are essential to the understanding of the poem. They touch the very core of the sin which defiled the Palace and destroyed the soul's happiness. It was not merely that she loved beauty and music and fragrance; but that in her love for these she lost her moral sense, denied her human duties, and scorned, instead of pitying and helping, her brother-men who lived in the plain below." (Van Dyke: *The Poetry of Tennyson, "The Palace of Art."*)

213. *The riddle of the painful earth.* Cf. *The Two Voices*, l. 170; *The Miller's Daughter*, ll. 19, 20; Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey:*

"In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world."

223. *The abysmal deeps of Personality.* This phrase was made fun of by Tennyson's college friends. They asked him if it referred to *The Times* newspaper. It is, however, a strong expression. It is of interest to note that he quoted it from a sentence by Arthur Hallam, in which he spoke of God, "with whom alone rest the abysmal secrets of personality."

227. *Mene.* Cf. *Daniel* v. 25.

237. *But in dark corners*, etc. The soul has deliberately isolated herself from the world, but the knowledge of its tragedies and sins and griefs presses in upon her consciousness.

242. *Fretted.* "'Worm-eaten,' used in the sense of the German *fressen.*" (Paigrave: *Lyrical Poems by Lord Tennyson*, p. 248.)

245. In the three following figures the idea is the same. The spot of stagnation, the salt pool, and the star are separated from their normal modes of activity, and they thus represent the soul who has shut herself away from the life that was naturally hers. See lines 263–4.

249–252. A perfectly finished Lincolnshire picture.

255. *Circumstance.* An old phrase for the surrounding sphere of the heavens.

293. *Pull not down.* When the soul has learned the lesson of human sympathy she finds the way to make her beautiful Palace not the home of despair but the home of joy and hope. She no longer lives in it alone, but shares it with the very people she before despised.

THE LOTOS-EATERS

This poem was one of those read in manuscript by Tennyson's Cambridge friends in 1832 (*Mem.* I. 86). It was published in the volume of 1833, and received some changes before its re-publication in 1842. It is founded on the *Odyssey*, ix. 83 pp.

"On the tenth day we set foot on the land of the lotos-eaters, who eat a flowery food. So we stepped ashore and drew water, and straightway my company took their midday meal by the swift ships. Now when we had tasted meat and drink, I sent forth certain of my company to go and make search what manner of men they were who here live upon the earth by bread, and I chose out two of my fellows, and sent a third with them as herald. Then straightway they went and mixed with the men of the lotos-eaters, and so it was that the lotos-eaters devised not death for our fellows, but gave them of the lotos to taste. Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotos-eating men, ever feeding on the lotos, and forgetful of his homeward way. Therefore I led them back to the ships weeping, and sore against their will, and dragged them beneath the benches and bound them in the hollow barques." (Translation of Butcher and Lang.)

Mr. Collins has pointed out that the poem owes much to Bion and Moschus, and that Spenser (*F. Q.*, Bk. II., Canto vi., description of the Idle Lake) and Thomson (*Castle of Indolence*) are also potent influences. The first division of the poem is written in the Spenserian stanza, the stanza of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Castle of Indolence*. An elaborate statement of the many parallelisms to Greek and English poems may be found in Collins's *Illustrations of Tennyson*.

7. *Full-faced above the valley.* In 1833,

"Above the valley burned the golden moon."

Which of these lines is more in harmony with line 38?

11. *Slow-dropping veils.* Of what kind of waterfall would these lines be a good description?

14. *River seaward flow.* In the earlier version Tennyson wrote "river's seaward." He changed it because he disliked the hissing sound of the letter *s* when it ended one word and came at the beginning of the following one. He was disturbed because a line,

"And freedom slowly broadens down"

was often quoted,

"And freedom broadens slowly down."

Getting rid of these sibilations he called "kicking the geese out of the basket." (*Mem.* II. 14.)

16. *Three silent pinnacles*, etc. In 1833,

"Three thunder-cloven thrones of oldest snow."

Which line do you prefer? Does "thunder" seem to you to mar the picture?

23. *Galingale.* A kind of sedge, of the Papyrus species.

28. *That enchanted stem.* The lotos of this poem is not the Egyptian water-lily but the mildly sweet fruit of a tree of northern Africa, the *Lotus Zizyphus.*

38. *Between the sun and moon.* Combine this line with the scenic details of stanzas 1 and 2, and reproduce the picture. In what direction east or west, was the boat going? Is it unusual for the setting sun to be still above the horizon after the full moon has risen?

41. *Most weary seem'd the sea.* Tennyson in 1830 in *The Sea Fairies* made a preliminary attempt at a reproduction of a classical theme taken from The *Odyssey* and representing the Siren call of the land to mariners weary of the ocean. The joys depicted in that poem are much more positive and active than those of *The Lotos-Eaters.* In the 1830 version of *The Sea Fairies* the weariness of the sea was also emphasized. In the poem as it now stands, however, this element was minimized because it had been so strongly worked out in *The Lotos-Eaters.*

46–56. Note in this stanza the soft, cool impressions of touch, the extreme slowness and gentleness of motion, the absence of color, and the absence of sound except for the very sweet and gentle music.

51. *Than tir'd,* etc. This line has apparently but eight syllables, but the word "tir'd" has "a long, drawling sound which corresponds to the sense. The lengthened quantity makes up for the missing syllable." (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson,* p. 347.)

64. *Nor ever fold our wings.* Cf. the temper of these mariners and that of Ulysses.

70–83. For the sentiment of this passage compare "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." *Matt.* vi. 28.

111. *With those.* Originally *with the.* Why is "those" preferable?

114–132. Added in 1842. This musing over the probable state of affairs in their island-home, Ithaca, adds a note of reality and human interest to the poem.

132. *Pilot-stars.* In the days of Ulysses what means would sailors have of determining direction?

133. *Amaranth and moly.* "Moly" is the medicinal plant that Hermes gave Ulysses to protect him against Circe, the enchantress. Cf. Milton, *Comus.*

> " . . . that moly
> That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave."

Also *Odyssey* (Cowper's translation),

> "The root was black,
> Milk-white the blossom; moly is its name
> In heaven."

145. *Barren.* The original word here was *flowery.* Do you prefer the changed picture?

150–173. These lines were new in 1842. The original forty lines were almost entirely descriptive of the natural charms of "the golden vale of the Lotos-land." The meter was a combination of short lines, mostly tetrameter, with occasional long swinging lines of seven beats. The close of the poem as it now stands contains (ll. 155–70) a description of the gods of Lucretius, whose selfish, indifferent lives in their golden abodes, while men suffer and toil, are represented as analogous to the lives of ease chosen by the Lotos-eaters, no matter what the confusion may be in "the little isle," their home.

165. *An ill-us'd race of men,* etc. In the poems of 1842 Tennyson for the first time showed strong sympathies with ordinary human nature. For a similar picture of the seamy side of life sympathetically portrayed see *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.* (Cf. *Intro.*, p. 69.)

"OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS"

One of Tennyson's poems of patriotism. It was published in 1842 (together with "*You ask me why*" and "*Love thou thy land*"), but was written by 1833 (*Mem.* I. 506).

1. *Of old.* Periods of history before ideals of freedom were at all common.

9. *Then slept,* etc. A description of the gradual revelation of freedom through the course of English history.

14. *Her isle-altar.* England.

15. *Triple forks.* The thunder-bolts of Jove. Suggested by the old Latin phrase *trisulca fulmina.* (Palgrave: *Lyrical Poems by Tennyson,* p. 261.)

18. *The wisdom of a thousand years.* Illustrates Tennyson's conservatism. Cf. *Intro.*, p. 45.

24. *The falsehood of extremes.* Cf. stanza 8 of "*Love thou thy land*":

> "Not clinging to some ancient saw;
> Not master'd by some modern term;
> Nor swift nor slow to change, but firm:
> And in its season bring the law."

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

One of the English Idylls in the volume of 1842, but written in part, perhaps entirely, by 1833 (*Mem.* I. 130). The sub-title, *The Pictures,* indicates the rather artificial plan of the poem. In form it is a dramatic monologue, but the auditor is not a real presence until the unveiling of the portrait at the end. As examples of the rich and the unadorned style this poem and *Dora* should be compared. Cf. *Intro.*, p. 40.

28. *More black than ashbuds.* Cf. *Intro.*, p. 30.

38. *The minster clock.* Mr. Walters in *In Tennyson Land* calls this poem the brightest and sweetest of the pictures of Lincolnshire.

The locality, he says, is the vale of Witham. The minster, then, would be Lincoln Cathedral, seen across the Witham River.

47. *The lime.* The branches of the lime are spreading and pendulous, and they divide and subdivide into numerous ramifications, on which the spray is small and thick. The word "feathers" refers to this light, drooping spray. The lime is much loved of bees. The far-famed honey of Hybla was due to the lime-trees that covered its sides and crowned its summit. (Keeler: *Our Native Trees*, pp. 24-30.)

93. *Mellow ouzel.* "Tennyson told Rawnsley (p. 101) that this was the line on which he prided himself most. 'I believe,' he said, 'that I was the first to describe the ouzel's note as a flute note.'" (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 381.) The ouzel is a species of thrush.

94. *The red-cap.* The Duke of Argyle wrote to Tennyson protesting against the expression "the red-cap whistled," thinking the poet must have meant the "black-cap," but Tennyson explained that when he was a lad "red-cap" was provincial for "gold-finch." (*Mem.* I. 451.) Grahame in *Birds of Scotland* says of the gold-finch,

> "How beautiful his plumes; his red-ringed head;
> His breast of brown; . . .
> He wings his way piping his shrillest call."

116. *Garden-glasses.* Glasses used for covering plants.

133. *Into greener circles.* Fairies are traditionally described as dancing in circles by moonlight. The circles where they have danced are marked by a more vivid green.

136. *Hebe.* In Greek mythology the goddess of youth and spring. Before the advent of Ganymede she was the cup-bearer of Olympus.

161. *Till every daisy.* The English daisy closes at night. The "white star of love" is the planet Venus, seen here as the evening star.

167. *Titianic Flora.* Flora is the Greek goddess of flowers. There is a famous picture of her by Titian in the Uffizi gallery in Florence. The colors of the picture are very brilliant.

186. *A Dutch love for tulips.* In Holland the mania for the cultivation of tulips began about 1634. In 1636 tulip marts were established in prominent cities in Holland and tulip bulbs were sold and re-sold in the same manner as stocks are in a stock-market. Although "tulipomania" as an epidemic has long had its day, tulips are still very popular in Holland.

248. *The leaves that tremble.* Tennyson "records that one night he 'saw the moonlight reflected in a nightingale's eye, as she was singing in the hedgerow.' He adds that her voice vibrated with such passion that he wrote of

> The leaves
> That tremble round the nightingale

in 'The Gardener's Daughter.'" (*Mem.* I. 79.)

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

There were two saints known as St. Simeon. Of these, the one known as St. Simeon the Elder was born at Sisan in Syria about 390, and was buried at Antioch about 460. Simeon the Younger was born at Antioch 521, and died 592. "The main lines in the story of both saints are exactly the same. Both stood on columns, both tortured themselves in the same ways, both wrought miracles, and both died at their posts of penance." (Collins: *The Early Poems of Tennyson*, p. 174.) The memoirs of both saints were given in the *Acta Sanctorum*, but Tennyson went for his information to *The Every Day Book* published by William Hone in 1826, and in Hone's account the memoirs of the two saints have apparently been amalgamated.

The name *Stylites* means "of the pillar," but St. Simeon stands in Tennyson's poem as the type not only of the "pillar saints" but of all men who count the mortification of the flesh an incontrovertible claim on the favor of heaven. Southey's *Curse of Kehama* is a drama illustrating one phase of the belief of St. Simeon, namely, that prayers, said in whatever spirit, are "a draft that the bank of heaven must honor." As *St. Agnes* represents the tender and mystical and self-forgetful side of the monastic spirit, so *St. Simeon Stylites* represents the harsh, self-conscious side of the same spirit. (Cf. *Intro.*, p. 52. Tennyson's continued interest in this phase of monasticism is shown by the character of King Pellam in *Balin and Balan*.

St. Simeon Stylites was first published in 1842, but it was mentioned in a letter from J. M. Kemble in November, 1833, as one of the poems humorously commented on by the Cambridge Apostles (*Mem.* I. 130).

1. *Altho' I be.* Throughout the poem St. Simeon thus calls himself the greatest of sinners. Cf. Burns's *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

10. *Thrice ten years.* The self-imposed penances of St. Simeon are taken by Tennyson from the original stories.

13. Note in this line and in line 16 the numerous strong accents, making the lines heavy and difficult.

79. *Miracles.* All the memoirs recount the miracles wrought by St. Simeon.

86. *Cubits.* A cubit varies in length in different countries. It is about seventeen or eighteen inches. Hence the final pillar was about sixty feet high. In the original story it was thirty-six cubits, or fifty-four feet.

123-157. Remarkable lines in the dramatic expression of the conflict between St. Simeon's conventional conception of himself as a sinner and his actual conception of himself as a saint. Note how his speech to the people (ll. 131–57) expands in transition from "you do ill to kneel to me" to his triumphant acceptance of the cry, "Behold a saint." Study the steps of the mental argument from "Yes, I can heal," to "Yea, crown'd a saint."

158–162. *I, Simeon.* What is the effect of the repetition of "I" through these lines?

164–166. The reference is to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ, and to Pontius Pilate, who believed in the innocence of Christ, but who delivered him over to be crucified. Is this extreme statement of his sinfulness natural after the preceding paragraph?

166. *On the coals*, etc. "These details seem taken from the well-known stories about Luther and Bunyan. All that the *Acta* say about St. Simeon is that he was pestered by devils." (Collins: *The Early Poems of Tennyson*, p. 179.)

169. *Abaddon.* In the account of the opening of the bottomless pit, the "locusts" (for description, see *Revelation* ix.) were empowered to hurt "men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" for a period of five months. The king over these locusts was the angel of the bottomless pit, Abaddon in the Hebrew tongue but Apollyon in the Greek tongue.

169. *Asmodeus.* In later Jewish demonology a destructive demon. There is an account of him in the *Book of Tobit.* Once in resisting the summons of the Almighty he broke his leg, and hence is called the "*diable boiteux*" or the lame devil. He is the hero of Le Sage's romance, *Le Diable Boiteux*, and reappears in Foote's adaptation of that play, *The Devil on Two Sticks*, as a witty, mischief-making character. Byron describes him in *The Vision of Judgment* as having sprained his left wing with carrying the poet Southey up for judgment. St. Simeon has, however, no touch of this later rather light and humorous conception of Asmodeus.

195–210. Compare these closing lines of vision with *Sir Galahad*, the last stanza.

ULYSSES

One of the poems of the 1842 volume, but written soon after Arthur Hallam's death in 1833. Tennyson said the poem gave his feelings "about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*" (*Mem.* I. 196). It was through the reading of this poem in 1845 that Sir Robert Peel determined to give Tennyson a pension. When Carlyle read the poem he said of lines 62–4, "These lines do not make me weep, but there is in me what would fill whole lachrymatories as I read.' (*Mem.* I. 214.)

In *Illustrations of Tennyson* (p. 58) Mr. Collins says: "We now come to *Ulysses*. The germ, the spirit, and the sentiment of this poem are from the twenty-sixth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Tennyson has indeed done little but fill in the sketch of the great Florentine. As is usual with him in all cases where he borrows, the details and minuter portions of the work are his own; he has added grace, elaboration, and symmetry; he has called in the assistance of other poets. A rough crayon draught has been metamorphosed into a perfect

picture. As the resemblances lie not so much in expression as in the general tone, we will in this case substitute for the original a literal version. Ulysses is speaking:—

"'Neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged sire, nor the due love which ought to have gladdened Penelope, could conquer me in the ardor which I had to become experienced in the world, and in human vice and worth. I put out into the deep open sea with but one ship, and with that small company which had not deserted me. . . . I and my companions were old and tardy when we came to that narrow pass where Hercules assigned his landmarks. "O brothers," I said, "who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West, deny not to this the brief vigil of your senses that remain, experience of the unpeopled world beyond the sun. Consider your origin: ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." . . . Night already saw the other pole with all its stars, and ours so low that it rose not from the ocean floor.' (*Inferno*, xxvi. 94–126.)"

2. *By this still hearth.* Unlike Dante, Tennyson put the scene in Ithaca.

3. *An aged wife.* Penelope.

10. *The rainy Hyades.* A group of nymphs who nursed the infant Zeus and as a reward were transferred to the heavens as a part of the constellation Taurus. Their rising with the sun was associated with the beginning of the rainy season. Virgil uses the phrase "*pluviasque Hyadas*" (*Aeneid*, i. 744).

27. *That eternal silence.* A pagan conception of death.

33. *Telemachus.* The son of Ulysses. See Stephen Phillips, *Ulysses, a Drama*, for an interesting presentation of the return of Ulysses to Ithaca.

45. *There gloom*, etc. "Mr. Herbert Paul (*The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1893) points out that the Homeric mariner never set sail at twilight if he could help it. But Tennyson chose the evening because it harmonized with the closing venture of Ulysses's life." (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 392.)

58. *Smite the sounding furrows.* Cf. *Odyssey*, iv. 580 and ix. 104.

63. *The Happy Isles.* The Fortunate Islands were originally imaginary islands in the western ocean, where the souls of the good are made happy. With the discovery of the Canary and Madeira Islands the name became attached to them.

64. *The great Achilles.* "For us Achilles has yet another interest. He, more than any character of fiction, reflects the qualities of the Greek race in its heroic age. His vices of passion and ungovernable pride, his virtue of splendid human heroism, his free individuality asserted in the scorn of fate, are representative of that Hellas which afterwards, at Marathon and Salamis, was destined to inaugurate a new era of spiritual freedom for mankind. . . . It is very difficult,

by any process of criticism, to define the impression of greatness and of glory which the character of Achilles leaves upon the mind. There is in him a kind of magnetic fascination, something incommensurable and indescribable, a quality like that which Goethe defined as daemonic." (Symonds: *The Greek Poets*, Vol. I., pp. 111, 122.)

SIR GALAHAD

Mentioned by Spedding in 1834 (*Mem.* I. 139). First published in 1842. For a full account of Galahad see *The Holy Grail*. The Grail is a cup or chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper. In this cup Joseph of Arimathea caught the last drops of Christ's blood as he was taken from the cross. There is a legend that it was kept on the top of a mountain and vanished when approached by any one not perfectly pure. The finding of the Grail was the ideal or aim of many knights, but no one could succeed who was not perfectly pure. Sir Galahad was the only one of the knights who saw the vision face to face.

Sir Galahad is a valiant and successful warrior, doing all knightly deeds against the heathen and in behalf of those needing succor. But he is above all a mystic. His devotion to an ideal is absolute. His spiritual longings are so intense that he loses consciousness not only of his surroundings, but of his bodily existence as well. With lines 70–2 compare lines 229–39 of *The Ancient Sage*. For an interesting account of Tennyson's personal trance experiences see *Mem.* I. 320, II. 473.

THE EAGLE

A fragment first printed in 1851 in the seventh edition of Tennyson's poems. Of this poem Mr. Stopford Brooke writes (*Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, p. 411):

"I used to think that the phrase 'wrinkled sea,' in the fragment called *The Eagle*, was too bold. But one day I stood on the edge of the cliff below Slieve League in Donegal. The cliff from which I looked down upon the Atlantic was nine hundred feet in height. . . . As I gazed down upon the sea below . . . the varying puffs that eddied in and out among the hollows and juttings of the cliffs covered the quiet surface with an infinite network of involved ripples. It was exactly Tennyson's wrinkled sea. Then, by huge good fortune, an eagle . . . flew out of his eyrie, and poised, barking, on his wings; but in a moment fell precipitate, as their manner is, straight down . . . to the sea. And I could not help crying out:

> " 'The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
> He watches from his mountain walls,
> And like a thunder-bolt he falls.' "

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"

"Made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning, between blossoming hedges." (*Mem.* I. 190.) It was one of the new poems in the volume of 1842. It is a lament for Arthur Hallam, and takes its place in spirit along with the earlier *In Memoriam* songs.

3. *And I would.* Cf. *In Memoriam*, V.

9. *And the stately ships.* Cf. the contrast between the continued life and activity of others and his own desolation, with the same idea in *In Memoriam*, VII:

> "He is not here; but far away
> The noise of life begins again."

11. *A vanished hand.* Cf. *In Memoriam*, XIII.

> "And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
> Silence, till I be silent too."

The burial of Arthur Hallam took place in January, 1834. On the evening of one of the sad winter days that followed, Tennyson wrote in his scrap-book some fragmentary lines which proved to be the germ of *In Memoriam*. They began thus:

> "Where is the voice I loved? Ah, where
> Is that dear hand that I would press?" (*Mem.* I. 107.)

15. *But the tender grace.* See *Intro.*, p. 49.

THE BROOK

These stanzas are from a narrative poem, *The Brook*. In the complete poem Lawrence Aylmer is represented as returning to his old home after a long absence. As he walks along by the brook that joins the river near Philip's farm, he remembers not only the garrulous old farmer and his pretty daughter Katie, but he thinks as well of his own dead brother, the young poet, who wrote the song of the brook. The brook itself, which, in the young poet's rhyme, sings its own song, is not, Tennyson tells us, any particular brook, but a brook of the imagination. This poem was published in the *Maud* volume of 1855.

1. *Coot and hern.* The coot and the heron are common English birds that live on the banks of streams and lakes.

4. *Bicker.* Originally the word meant "to fight," but a secondary meaning is "to move quickly, to quiver, to be tremulous, like flame or water." This is evidently the meaning here, with an additional implied impression of "flash" or "shine" in alliance with the "sparkle" of the preceding line.

7. *Thorps.* Small villages or hamlets. Cf. *The Holy Grail*, ll. 547–9:

> "Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
> And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
> To these old walls."

11. *For men may come*, etc. Note the use of these lines four times as a refrain.

20. *Willow-weed.* The Great Willow-herb *(Epilobium hirsutum).*

20. *Mallow.* A plant the fruit of which is a depressed disk popularly called a "cheese."

28. *Grayling.* A fish allied to the trout, but with a smaller mouth and larger scales.

31. *Waterbreak.* A ripple.

38. *Covers.* A hunting term for woods or thickets that conceal the game. Here refers less specifically to hazel thickets.

47. *Shingly bars.* Banks of loose, coarse gravel.

SONGS FROM *THE PRINCESS*

The Princess, Tennyson's first long poem, appeared in 1847. It was afterwards subjected to much revision. The songs between the parts were added in the third edition, 1850. Of these songs Tennyson said: "The child is the link thro' the parts, as is shown in the songs, which are the best interpreters of the poem. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs between the separate divisions of the poem; again I thought that the poem would explain itself, but the public did not see the drift." (*Mem.* I. 254.) The "drift" of the poem was that normal human affections were too strong to be suppressed by even the most attractive of colleges formed on the basis of the Princess Ida's college. The sum of it all is in the line about the Princess:

"A greater than all knowledge beat her down."

The songs lay emphasis on the child as the real heroine of the poem. As given in *The Princess* these songs have no titles.

THE CHILD'S GRAVE

In some editions lines 6-9 were omitted. Do you think they should have been permanently omitted? The power of the memory of the child to reunite sundered hearts is in delicate contrast to Ida's attempt—even against her own instinct—to belittle the importance of children. (III. 234-44.) (Wallace: *The Princess*, pp. xlix-lii.)

THE CRADLE SONG

Tennyson made two versions of this song and sent them to Miss Sellwood (afterwards his wife), asking which should be published. She chose the "Sweet and low" as more song-like. (*Mem.* I. 255.)

THE BUGLE SONG

In Mr. de Vere's account of Tennyson's visit to Ireland in 1848 he says: "The echoes of the bugle at Killarney on that loveliest of lakes inspired the song introduced into the second edition of his

'Princess.' . . . It is marvelous that so many of the chief characteristics of Killarney should have found place in a poem so short." (*Mem.* I. 292.) So far as the song is definitely related to the poem it is through lines 13–16, which express the immortality of the influence of love.

10. *The horns of Elfland.* The echoes suggest a fairy origin. Cf. the description of the echoes in Coleridge's *Christabel*, Part II.

"TEARS, IDLE TEARS"

Mr. Knowles in *The Nineteenth Century*, January, 1893, writes of Tennyson: "All such subjects (idealism, the state of trance, etc.) moved him profoundly, and to an immense curiosity and interest about them. He told me that 'Tears, Idle Tears' was written as an expression of such longings. It is in a way like St. Paul's 'groanings which cannot be uttered.' It was written at Tintern when the woods were all yellowing with autumn, seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called 'the passion of the past.' And it is so always with me now: it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture, and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move." It is to be noted that this song is unrhymed, "a blank verse lyric." Cf. *Mem.* I. 253, II. 73.

"A SMALL SWEET IDYLL"

This is the song the Princess Ida read aloud as she watched at night by the wounded Prince. It is spoken of in the poem as "a small sweet Idyl." Tennyson was accustomed to spell the word with but one "l" when he spoke of his shorter idyllic poems. In substance it is a call to the Princess to forsake the isolation of such a life as she had planned and to ally herself with ordinary human needs and loves. It was "written in Switzerland (chiefly at Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald), and descriptive of the waste Alpine heights and gorges, and of the sweet, rich valleys below." For *simple* rhythm and vowel music Tennyson ranked this poem as "amongst his most successful work." (*Mem.* I. 252.) This poem also is a blank verse lyric.

5. *To glide a sunbeam*, etc. The sunbeam shining on the blasted pine, and the star seen close to a glittering peak of ice, seem signally out of place. (Cf. Wallace: *The Princess*, p. 210.)

7. *Love is of the valley.* Cf. the isolation attempted in *The Palace of Art*, and the final coming down for real happiness to the cottage in the vale.

10. *Hand in hand*, etc. "A rich romantic version of the old proverb found in the Roman poet Terence—'Without Ceres and Bacchus Venus freezes.' The original intention and application of the phrase

were, of course, gross in character, but it is equally true in this spiritualized form." (Wallace: *The Princess*, p. 210.)

12. *Foxlike in the vine.* Cf. *Song of Solomon* ii. 15, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines."

13. *Silver horns.* The peaks of the mountains. Lines 13–23 are descriptive of the "waste Alpine heights" where love refuses to dwell.

15. *Firths of ice.* Glaciers.

16. *Huddling slant*, etc. "'Huddling' refers to their confused, ridgy structure, due to the continuous pressure from above and the irregular course which they pursue between the broken and jagged sides of the ravine. The 'furrows' are the crevasses which, owing to the splitting of the ice, run obliquely across the surface of the glacier. The outlet at the bottom is called 'dusky' in contrast to the snows all about." (Wallace: *The Princess*, p. 211.)

23. *Like a broken purpose.* A moral fact used as a similitude for a fact in nature.

25. *Azure pillars.* Straight columns of smoke going up in clear weather.

29. *Myriads*, etc. Note the description of rippling water by the striking accumulation of additional short syllables, while liquid labials and soft "o" and "u" sounds represent the cooing of doves and the humming of bees. (Cf. Wallace: *The Princess*, p. 212.)

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

This *Ode* was written after September 14, the date of the Duke's death, and published November 18, 1852, on the day of the funeral. The poem, with final revisions, appeared in the *Maud* volume in 1855. This poem was one Tennyson enjoyed reading aloud because he could bring out its rich and varied music. Mr. Van Dyke heard him read it in 1892, and says:

"In the first two strophes the movement begins with a solemn prelude and the confused sound of a mighty throng assembling. The third strophe is the Dead March, with its long, slow, monotonous, throbbing time, expressed by a single rhyme recurring at the end of each line. The fourth strophe is an interlude: the poet, watching the procession, remembers the great Duke as he used to walk through the London streets, and recalls the simplicity and strength of his appearance and character. In the fifth strophe the music is controlled by the repeated tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's cathedral, and then by the volleying guns, as the body is carried into the church. The strophe closes with a broad, open movement which prepares the way, like an 'avenue of song,' for the anthem of strophes vi., vii., and viii. It begins with a solo of three lines, in a different measure, representing Nelson waking in his tomb and asking who it is that comes to rest beside him. The answer follows with the full music

of organ and choir, celebrating first the glory of Wellington's achievements as warrior, the value of his counsel and conduct as statesman, and then the unselfish integrity of his character as a man, closing with a burst of harmony in which the repetition of the word 'honour' produces the effect of a splendid fugue. A great silence follows, and the ninth strophe begins with a single quiet voice (Tennyson said, 'Here I thought I heard a sweet voice, like the voice of a woman') singing of peace and love and immortality. The movement is at first tender and sorrowful, then aspiring and hopeful, then solemn and sad as the dust falls on the coffin, and at last calm and trustful in the victory of faith." (*Poems by Tennyson*, p. 439.)

In theme and spirit the descriptions here given of the Duke of Wellington and of Admiral Lord Nelson are entirely in harmony with Wordsworth's *The Character of a Happy Warrior*, which was, in part, meant as a tribute to Nelson.

30. *Great in counsel.* His papers are said by Sir Robert Peel to be "marked by comprehensiveness of views, simplicity and clearness of expression, and profound sagacity."

37. *To true occasion true.* "His chief characteristics were manliness and public spirit. The former showed itself in his simplicity, straightforwardness, self-reliance, imperturbable nerve, and strength of will." (*Dictionary of National Biography.*)

39. *Four-square.* This expression denotes the "best conformation for sturdy resistance."

42. *World-victor's victor.* Wellington conquered Napoleon.

49. *Under the cross of gold.* In St. Paul's Cathedral there is, on the top of the dome, a lantern surmounted by a ball, on the top of which is a great cross, the ball and the cross together weighing 8,960 pounds. Beneath the central arch of the aisle of the cathedral is the monument to the Duke of Wellington. The bronze figure of Wellington rests on a lofty sarcophagus overshadowed by a rich marble canopy, with twelve Corinthian columns. Above are colossal groups of Valour and Cowardice, Truth and Falsehood.

55. *The towering car*, etc. The Duke of Wellington was buried with "unexampled magnificence." The funeral procession which passed by Constitution Hill, Piccadilly, and the Strand, to St. Paul's, was gazed at by a concourse of one and one-half million people.

64. *Many a clime.* Referring to the many victories of the Duke of Wellington in India, Portugal, Spain, and France.

83. *Mighty seaman.* Admiral Horatio Nelson, who was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1805. Lines 80–2 are supposed to be uttered by him. Wellesley and Nelson met once by chance in the colonial office in September, 1804, just after Wellesley's return from India, and just before Nelson left England for the last time.

97. *Nor ever lost an English gun.* "During that period that can be said of him which can be said of no other captain—that he cap-

tured 3,000 cannon from the enemy, and never *lost a single gun.*" [Quoted by Van Dyke from Disraeli's speech moving a vote of thanks to the Queen for the public funeral to the Duke.]

99. *Assaye.* A village of British India, where Wellesley, September 23, 1803, defeated more than 50,000 Mahrattas with a loss of only about 1,800 British soldiers. Wellesley was in India eight years.

103. *Round affrighted Lisbon.* From October, 1810, to March, 1811, the English and Portuguese, under Wellington, defended the lines of Torres Vedras against the French. These lines of fortification extended from near the little town of Torres Vedras to the river Tagus, and so nearly surrounded Lisbon.

110. *Back to France.* In 1813 Wellington drove the French out of the Peninsula and invaded France.

121. *Barking.* Tennyson was not the first to speak of the barking of the eagle. Cf. Wordsworth, *On the Power of Sound:*

> "Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed
> From snowy peak and cloud, attune
> Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
> Of joy."

122. *Duty's iron crown.* A reference to the Iron Crown of Lombardy, so called from a narrow band of iron within it, said to be beaten out of one of the nails used at the Crucifixion. . . . The crown is preserved with great care at Monza, near Milan, and Napoleon, like his predecessor Charlemagne, was crowned with it. (See Brewer: *Dict. of Phrase and Fable.*)

123. *On that loud Sabbath.* The battle of Waterloo was fought on Sunday, June 18, 1815.

129. *A sudden jubilant ray.* "The Duke gave the long-wished-for command for a general advance of the army along the whole line upon the foe. . . . As they joyously sprang forward against the discomfited masses of the French, the setting sun broke through the clouds which had obscured the sky during the greater part of the day, and glittered on the bayonets of the allies while they in turn poured down into the valley and toward the heights that were held by the foe." (Creasy: *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, p. 363.)

137. *The Baltic and the Nile.* In 1801 Admiral Nelson went against Napoleon and his northern allies, and on April 2d, sailed into the harbor of Copenhagen and crushed the naval power of Denmark in four hours. Three years before (August 2, 1798), Nelson had totally destroyed the vast fleet of Napoleon, which was at anchor in Aboukir Bay, at the mouth of the Nile.

164. *That sober freedom.* Cf. "*Of old sat Freedom on the heights,*" ll. 13, 24, and notes. Cf. "*You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,*" stanza 2, for a description of England,

> "It is the land that freemen till,
> That sober-suited Freedom chose."

188. *Truth-teller was our England's Alfred.* In the *Annals of St. Neot* King Alfred was called *Aelfredus Viridicus.*

196. *All her stars.* In the course of his history Wellington was decorated with many Orders of the highest rank, and not by England alone but by foreign countries. He was steadily advanced in rank, being, in succession, baronet, viscount, earl, marquis, and duke. Parliament also repeatedly gave him very large grants of money or land.

215. *Crags of Duty scaled.* Cf. Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, stanza 6, in which there is a similar conception of duty. In the beginning Wordsworth addresses Duty as the "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God," and again as "Stern Law-giver," but finally he says,

> "Yet thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As is the smile upon thy face."

THE NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

For the origin of this poem see *Intro.*, p. 37. It was written in February, 1861 (*Mem.* I. 471), but not published till the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. For Browning's view of the poem see *Intro.*, p. 36. This is one of the poems Tennyson cared most to read aloud, and he is said to have brought out the humor in a remarkable manner. The difficulty in the way of understanding the language is less than at first the unfamiliar look of the page would indicate, and the strength and humor of the sketch more than repay any labor in conquering the phraseology. The dialect is Lincolnshire. The following explanations of the more difficult words are, for the most part, taken from Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* or Murray's *New English Dictionary.*

1. Where hast thou been so long and me lying here alone?

2. *Thourt nowt.* Thou art of no use. *Abeän an' agoän.* Been and gone.

3. *Moänt 'a.* May not have.

5. *A says.* He says. Cf. *a do*, he does, l. 6; *a towd*, he told, l. 11.

7. *I've 'ed*, etc. I've had my pint of ale every night since I've been here.

10. *A taäkin*, etc. Taking you to himself.

11. Notice the old farmer's way of compounding for his sins. Cf. stanzas iv. to vi. *Ma* is "me"; *an's toithe* means "and his tithe."

12. *As I 'a done boy.* As I have done by.

13. *Larn'd a ma' beä.* Learned he may be. Notice hereafter that "a" is either "he" or is used with a participle as "a bummin'" or stands for "have," (in which case it is written "'a"), or it is, as in present usage, the indefinite article.

14. *Cast oop.* Cast up against me. *Barne.* Child.

16. *Woost*, Worst. *Raäte.* The poor tax.

17. And I always went to his church. He went to church, paid the poor tax and his tithes, and voted as the squire told him to. Nor in the face of such virtues could he comprehend the parson's attitude in harping on a dying man's sins. Trench wrote of this poem to the Bishop of Oxford, "Every clergyman ought to study it. It is a wonderful revelation of the heathenism still in the land." (Waugh: *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, p. 195.)

18. *'Um.* Him, i.e., the parson. *A buzzard-clock.* A cockchafer, any buzzing insect, the May bug.

23. *'Siver.* Howsoever. *I kep 'um.* I supported him. *Tha mun.* Thou must.

27. *Summun.* Some one. Cf. *Psalm* cxvi. 11, "I said in my haste, All men are liars." This vague memory of Bible words had stayed in his mind.

28. *'E.* He, i.e., the parson. What, the old farmer thinks, is one sermon a week compared to an important piece of work like getting Thurnaby waste into good state for cultivation?

30. *Boggle.* Written "bogy," "bogey," "bogle," "boggle," and means a ghost, a hobgoblin. Tam O'Shanter was afraid lest "bogles" should catch him unawares.

31. *A butter-bump.* Sometimes called "a butter-bittern." A colloquial name for the bittern. Wright quotes, "We heer'd the butter-bump boomin', an' the croäns croak-croakin'." The bittern is a solitary bird, frequenting marshes and having a loud, hollow note. Kirke White describes a savage as shrinking from "the dismaying solitude" when he hears "the bittern booming in the reeds." So it was quite natural that the call of the butter-bump should be thought that of a boggle.

32. *Raäved an' rembled 'um.* *Raäved* is from the verb "rive," to plough ground never before ploughed; or to tear up; *rembled* is to throw out. When he put the ground in good condition he got rid of the boggle too.

33. *Keëper's it wur.* It was thought to be the ghost of the gamekeeper because he had been found dead, lying on his face among the wild anemones growing on the waste.

35. *Toäner.* Either Noäks or Thimbleby had shot the keeper, and Noäks had been hanged for it at the assizes.

37. *Dubbut.* Do but.

38. *Bracken an' fuzz.* *Bracken* is a name for the larger kinds of fern; *fuzz* is "furze," a low shrub with yellow flowers, and common on barren, heathy districts of England and Scotland.

40. *Yows.* Ewes. *Down i' seeäd.* Sowed to clover.

42. *Ta-year.* This year. *Thruff.* Through.

43. *Nobbut.* Only.

44. *Haäte.* Eight.

46. *Wonn as saws.* Such a one as sows. The old farmer does not do haphazard, careless work.

47. *A'.* Equivalent to "Oh."

48. *Michaelmas.* A church festival celebrated September 29.

49. *As 'ant*, etc. Who hasn't a ha'penny worth of sense.

52. *Cauve.* Calve. *Hoälms.* Holms.

53. *Quoloty.* The gentry. *Ma.* Me.

54. *Sewerloy.* Surely.

58. *Howd.* Hold.

61. *Kittle o' steäm.* The steam threshing machine was introduced into Lincolnshire in 1848. (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 400.)

62. *Huzzin'.* Making a buzzing or humming noise. *Maäzin'.* Astonishing and frightening.

64. *It.* I.e., the presence of the threshing machine in the fields he had tilled.

66. *'Toättler.* A teetotaler.

66. *An a's hallus*, etc. And he's always telling the old tale.

67. *Floy.* Fly.

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

This poem was published in *The Holy Grail* volume of 1869. For the origin of it see *Intro.*, p. 37. The locality is the same as in the preceding poem, but the time is later. The independent property-holder has succeeded the farm-bailiff.

1. *'Erse.* Horse. Cf. l. 41, where we have "esh" for "ash." "Ass" was also often called "ess."

5. *Craw to pluck.* Proverbial expression for "to have something disagreeable or awkward to settle or clear up." Ramsay and Burns both use "craw" for "crow."

8. *Woä then woä.* The farmer and his son are on horseback and the old man's horse is apparently restive. Notice how frequently the monologue is broken in upon by remarks to the horse.

14. *Scoors o' gells.* Scores of girls.

15. *The flower as blaws.* This farmer, like the preceding one, has some faint memory of biblical phrases. "As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth." *Psalm* ciii. 15.

17. *Stunt.* Obstinate, angry, sulky.

24. *As 'ant nowt.* *As* means that, which, or who; *'ant* is equivalent to "hant" for "has not"; *nowt*, nothing. The farmer uses the double negative; *weänt 'a nowt*, will not have anything.

26. *Addle her breäd.* Earn her own living. Cf. "It isn't what a chap addles, it's what a chap saves 'at makes him rich." (Wright.)

27. *Git hissén clear.* Get himself clear of debt.

28. *The bed as 'e ligs on.* A proverbial expression meaning that one must accept the natural outcome of his actions. *Ligs*, lies.

Lincolnshire for a coverlid is "a ligger." *Shere.* Shire (nearly equivalent to modern "county").

30. *Shut on.* Get rid of. Cf. "get shut of," as slang phrase in England and United States.

31. *I' the grip.* The "grip" is a small trench for draining a field.

32. *A far-welter'd yowe.* Said of a sheep that is overthrown, cast on its back. "The sheep are often found on their backs, and if not relieved soon die; this is called far-weltard or lifting, and they have dogs that will turn them." (Wright.)

38. *Burn.* Born.

39. *Mays nowt.* Makes nothing.

40. *The bees.* Lincolnshire for flies, and not necessarily large flies. Cf. "I've gotten a bee in my eye." (Wright.) *Fell.* Keen, fierce. *As owt.* As anything.

51. *Ammost.* Almost.

52. *Tued.* Bustled about. *Moil'd.* Toiled.

53. *Beck.* Brook.

54. *Feyther run oop.* His property extended up.

55. *Brig.* Bridge.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

During the summer of 1830 Tennyson and Arthur Hallam made a tour through the Pyrenees. (*Mem.* I. 51.) In the summer of 1861 Tennyson revisited some of the places he had first seen with his friend. "On August 6th, my father's birthday, we arrived at Cauteretz—his favorite valley in the Pyrenees. Before our windows we had the torrent rushing over its rocky bed from far away among the mountains and falling in cataracts . . . He wrote his lyric, 'All Along the Valley,' 'after hearing the voice of the torrent seemingly sound deeper as the night grew.'" The poem was in memory of Arthur Hallam. See *Intro.*, p. 49.

4. *Two and thirty.* "My father was vexed that he had written 'two and thirty years ago,' instead of 'one and thirty years ago,' and as late as 1892 wished to alter it, as he hated inaccuracy." (*Mem.* I. 475.)

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

Mrs. Tennyson writes in her *Journal* for December, 1867, "A. is reading Hebrew; he talked much . . . about all-pervading spirit being more understandable by him than solid matter. He brought down to me his psalm-like poem, 'Higher Pantheism.'" (*Mem.* II. 48.) "This poem was sent by Tennyson to the Metaphysical Society [June 2, 1869] . . . as undoubtedly expressive of his personal views. It deals with . . . the ultimate nature of reality, and the relation of the finite to the infinite. With reference to these problems we find him to be an Idealist. He declares all reality, in the final analysis, to be mentality. That is, there is only one kind of being and that is mind

[Cf. ll. 1–8]. . . . The reality of corporeal or material objects is annihilated, and minds only are affirmed to exist—the Infinite Mind and finite minds. . . . God is, and He is personal. Man is, and he is personal. God and Man as personal being constitute the only reality, and between them exists a close relationship." [Cf. ll. 11–12.] (Sneath: *The Mind of Tennyson*, p. 64.) Hallam Tennyson writes of his father: "He said again to us with deep feeling, in January, 1869: 'Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real; it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me.'" (*Mem.* II. 90.) Tennyson's teaching in this poem "is not pantheism in the common sense of the word. It is a higher truth; for while it teaches that God is in the Visible All, it denies that the Visible All expresses the whole of God. The manifestation of God in the world is dark, broken, distorted, because we ourselves are imperfect." (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 449.)

4. *Dreams*, etc. In *The Ancient Sage* Tennyson speaks of this world as "a shadow-world" (l. 239). Our life here is the delusion, the dream. The real life comes with the "dawn of more than mortal day" (l. 284). But dreams are true while they last.

5. *This weight of body and limb.* Cf. *In Memoriam*, XLV., where one purpose of life is represented to be "the development of self-conscious personality." (Genung: *Tennyson's In Memoriam*, p. 133.)

11–12. *Speak to him*, etc. "Cf. *Psalm* lxv. 2; *Romans* viii. 16; *Acts* xvii. 27. This is the truth of prayer." (Van Dyke: *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 450.)

"FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"

Written at Wegner's Wells on Hindhead, a spot Tennyson particularly liked. (*Mem.* II. 209.) The philosophical idea underlying the poem is the unity of all nature. "Cf. William Blake's lines (*Auguries of Innocence*),

> "To see a world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower;
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour,"

and Wordsworth's *Primrose on the Rock*, and the lines in his great *Ode*,

> "To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The meter is rather rough, as Tennyson admitted (*Mem.* II. 94), but he explained line 5 as being anapæstic.

IN MEMORIAM

"In 1850 Mr. Tennyson gave to the world under the title of 'In Memoriam' perhaps the richest oblation ever offered by the affection of friendship at the tomb of the departed. The memory of Arthur Henry Hallam, who died suddenly in 1833, at the age of twenty-two, will doubtless live chiefly in connection with this volume. But he is well known to have been one who, if the term of his days had been prolonged, would have needed no aid from a friendly hand, would have built his own enduring monument, and would have bequeathed to his country a name, in all likelihood, greater than that of his very distinguished father. . . There perhaps was no one among those who were blessed with his friendship, nay, as we see, not even Mr. Tennyson [Cf. *In Memoriam*, CIX., CX., CXI., CXII., CXIII.], who did not feel at once bound closely to him by commanding affection, and left far behind by the rapid, full and rich development of his ever-searching mind. . . . But what can be a nobler tribute than this, that for seventeen years after his death, a poet, fast rising towards the lofty summits of his art, found that young, fading image the richest source of his inspiration, and of thoughts that gave him buoyancy for a flight such as he had not hitherto attained?"(Gladstone's *Gleanings from Past Years*, Vol. II., pp. 136–7. Quoted in *Mem.* I. 299.) This review of *In Memoriam* by Mr. Gladstone was, in Tennyson's opinion, one of the ablest that appeared.

For a comparison of *In Memoriam* with other writings in the same class, especially *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, see Genung's *Tennyson's In Memoriam*, pp. 32–40.

PROLOGUE

The *Prologue* is dated 1849, the year before the poem was published. Although it stands first, it was written last, and is a kind of summary of the mental and emotional outcome of the whole series of poems.

1. *Immortal Love.* Tennyson said that he used "Love" in this passage in the same sense as St. John (1 *John* iv). (*Mem.* I. 312.)

2–4. Cf. 1 *Peter* i. 8. Cf. *Mem.* I. 311. "Nothing worthy proving can be proven." Cf. *The Ancient Sage*, 57–67.

5–8. Cf. *John* i. 3.

11. *He thinks*, etc. Man has an instinctive belief in immortality. A just God, Tennyson says, would not create him with that instinct if there were no future life to satisfy it. In writing to Mrs. Elmhurst on the loss of her son, Tennyson said: "You can not catch the voice, or feel the hands, or kiss the cheek, that is all; a separation for an hour, not an eternal farewell. If it were not so, that which made us would seem too cruel a Power to be worshiped." (*Mem.* II. 105.)

15–16. "If one can not believe in the freedom of the human will, as of the Divine, life is hardly worth having, said Tennyson." "The lines that he oftenest repeated about Free-will were,

"'This main miracle that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.'"
(*Mem.* I. 317.)

28. *As before.* I.e., before modern scientific thought with its skeptical trend had separated "mind and soul." In the preceding stanza the "beam in darkness" is scientific knowledge which comes from God, and must be allowed to grow, but if those who have knowledge do not have reverence their knowledge makes them vain. They can not "bear the light."

33. 'Forgive what was sinful in the sorrow for the dead.'

34. Van Dyke compares Wordsworth's lines (*Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*):

"The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!"

35–36. Cf. *Psalm* cxliii. 2, "In thy sight shall no man living be justified."

I

The first six poems are prefatory in their nature. In I. the poet says that before his own sorrows he believed that all bitter experiences could become agencies in a higher development. But when grief actually comes, it is most difficult to look beyond it to find a gain to match the loss. So long as he loves he must grieve, and he would prefer to endure forever a passionate grief rather than to be one in whose heart love could fade.

1. *Him who sings.* "As far as I recollect I referred to Goethe," said Tennyson, in a letter written in 1880. (Collins: *Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 98.) Cf. Tennyson's saying, "Goethe is consummate in so *many different styles.*" (*Mem.* II. 392.)

VII

The poet visits the city house (No. 67 Wimpole St., London), where he used to find his friend waiting for him. It is a moment of utter desolation. The structure of the verse corresponds to this mood. Note the harsh sibilants of l. 11, and the difficult alliteration and lack of rhythm in l. 12.

XI

The poet is waiting for the coming of the ship that is to bring the body of his friend. It is a calm autumn morning in harmony with the calm, the lethargy, the exhaustion of grief, in his own heart. Note the rare beauty of this view, with its lovely immediate foreground and the wide plains stretching away to the sea that bounds the view. Except for the fall of the chestnut there is complete silence. The heavy dew of an autumn morning is on the furze, and on the filmy, cobweb-like substances that in autumn cling to stubble or low bushes. The word "calm" used to begin six of the twenty lines, and its fre-

quent repetition in the last two stanzas, is an effective device to give to the picture a certain monotone that is of itself quiet. Note the rhythmical motion in the last stanza, like the motion of the sea. Compare XV., where the wild unrest of the poet's heart is reproduced in the strain and stir of the stormy autumn evening.

XXVII

No. XIX. records the burial of Hallam. In succeeding songs the poet commemorates the happiness of their friendship and the sadness of the life that he must now live alone. Yet (XXVII.) he never has a moment of despair so black as to wish that he had never loved. He does not desire the happiness or peace born of a dull nature and a limited experience. He would take love and the intensest consequent grief rather than the "rest" begotten of a deficient power to feel.

4–8. "What reasonable creature, if he could have been askt beforehand, would not have said, 'Give me the metaphysical power; let me be the lord of my decisions; leave physical quietude and dull pleasure to lower lives'." (*Mem.* I. 170).

6. *The field of time.* "As having no future life." (Palgrave: *Lyrical Poems by Tennyson*, p. 264.)

XXX

On the first Christmas eve after Hallam's death his friends attempt to carry on the customary festivities, but the gladness is a vain pretense. Sadness creeps over them, and silently they weep, until their courage is roused by a thought of the continued life of the one who is gone, and of his unchanged love for them.

19. *They rest*, etc. I.e., the sleep of death is sweet.

25–28. The keen, seraphic flame of the soul, caught up from its weak and frail earthly body, has new power, and pierces through all that separates it from our spirits.

29–32. The new hope is typified by the sunrise.

XXXIV

XXXI–XXXIII. discuss the story of Lazarus and rather wistfully describe Mary as a type of those who in simplicity of spirit can forego questionings and doubt and whose lives of pure blessedness are fruitful in good works. But (XXXIV.) to the poet has come a terrible doubt as to the reality of the future life. If life is not eternal it has for him neither charm nor significance. The earth and the sun and all of beauty that they can show are mere accidental delights such as might come in the work of "some wild Poet" writing without any aim. Death could hardly come too soon.

LIV

In XXXIX. spring has come and the poet makes a sad visit to the churchyard. In the succeeding "short swallow flights of song" are many phases of his hope and despair. He seeks in all ways to estab-

lish in his own mind a sense of his friend's real existence, and of their nearness to each other. Yet he almost fears this nearness through a consciousness of his own frailty. But in LIV. is expressed the large hope that every life will at last, far off it may be, but at last come to blessedness. This hope is, however, based not on knowledge but on a strong desire.

3. *Pangs of nature.* Disease. *Sins of will.* Voluntary wrong-doing.

4. *Taints of blood.* Heredity.

LXXII

This poem marks the first anniversary of Hallam's death. There is a wild September storm, but had the day been of the loveliest sort it would have seemed to the poet equally desolate. He longs to have the day come to an end.

6. *Reverse of doom.* The death of Hallam, which, so far as the poet was concerned, robbed nature of all her charm.

10–12. Note close observation in this description of the effect of a heavy rain on rose-bushes and on the daisy.

13. *Who might'st have heaved,* etc. There might have been a calm, brilliant sunrise, or there might have been a day of sunshine and soft winds.

23–25. Throughout the poem note the impression of physical discomfort, the chill, heavy atmosphere, the sense of disaster to man and nature. On this anniversary the poet seems to have lost all the resignation and hope apparently achieved in preceding songs.

LXXVIII

In this song the second Christmas has come. It is a calm day of frost and snow. On this Christmas there are no tears, no marks of distress. Has love, then, grown less with time? No, in the heart the deep sense of loss is the same, but it becomes a part of one's being, and no longer finds expression in tears.

5. *Yule-clog.* Yule-log.

11. *Mimic pictures.* Tableaux.

12. *Hoodman blind.* Blindman's buff.

XCIX

This song marks the second anniversary of Hallam's death. Cf. LXXII. This morning is calm and beautiful. There is abundant evidence of joyous life in nature, and the poet reflects on the people who will waken on this balmy morning to memories of bridals, births, or deaths. Of the myriads who mourn he counts himself one in experience and sympathy.

6–8. Places associated in the past with Hallam.

CVI

It is New Year's Eve. The poet listens to the church-bells, and he calls upon them to 'ring out' not only the personal grief that saps the mind, but also public wrongs of whatever sort. And they are commanded to 'ring in' all forms of good as summed up and exemplified in Christ. There is an energy, an enthusiasm, and a hopefulness in this poem, not characteristic of any preceding it. A new era in the poet's experience is entered upon.

CXXIX

In CXXVIII. the poet has expressed the hope that, in spite of the recurrence of old errors, the nations are striving upward, and (CXXIX.) all dreams of progress are mingled with a consciousness of his friend. The whole poem shows the strange combination of nearness and remoteness in the poet's feeling towards Hallam. But the substance of it all is in the assurance that he *is* "friend, past, present, and to be."

CXXX

This sense of the union of his friend's spirit with nature reads like pantheism, but the last stanza is inconsistent with that view. A re-merging of both souls into the general spirit could hardly call forth so rapturous an expression as the last line.

CXXXI

"And now, in solemn aspiration, the poet's prayer ascends to that Eternal Power which is over all and through all, and in us all, that we may be purified; and that, faithful to our appointed task, and strong in self-control, we may, to the end, abide in Him, believing where we can not prove." (Miss Chapman: *A Companion to In Memoriam*, p. 71.)

"OH! THAT 'TWERE POSSIBLE"

In September, 1834, Spedding writes to Tennyson, "I have also the alterations of 'Oh that 'twere possible,' improvements, I must admit, tho' I own I did not think that could have been." Hence the poem was written before that date. It was published in *The Tribute* in 1837. The relation of this poem to the poem *Maud* of which it finally formed a part is thus described: "Tennyson was engaged on his new poem '*Maud*.' Its origin and composition were, as he described them, singular. He had accidentally lighted upon a poem of his own which begins, 'O that 'twere possible,' and which had long before been published in a selected volume got up by Lord Northampton for the aid of a sick clergyman. It had struck him, in consequence, I think, of a suggestion made by Sir John Simeon, that, to render the poem fully intelligible, a preceding one was necessary. He wrote it; the second poem too required a predecessor; and thus the whole work was written, as it were, *backwards*." (Aubrey de Vere in *Mem.* I. 379.)

Maud was published in 1855. *Oh! that 'twere possible* was changed in many places to suit the story that had grown up around it. It is given here as it appeared in *The Tribute*, because, when read as a separate poem, the references to the rest of the poem are confusing. In *Maud* this poem is the fourth division of the second part, and it there stands as the lament of the hero for Maud, the girl whom he loved and by whom he was loved, but whose death had come in consequence of a duel between her brother and her lover, the brother having been killed in the conflict, and the lover having been compelled to flee from England. After a period of insanity the lover is restored by the memory of Maud and by new emotions of patriotism roused by the Crimean War. *The Tribute* version of the poem is simply the lament of a lover for the girl he had wooed as his wife and who had been suddenly taken from him by death. There are none of the tragic complications of *Maud*.

13. *Ah, God! that it were possible.* Mr. Churton Collins (*Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 115) calls attention to a similar passage in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, iv. 2:

> "O that it were possible we might
> But hold some two days' conference with the dead:
> From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,
> I never shall know here."

17. *It leads me forth.* Note that here, as in *Mariana in the Moated Grange*, the sorrow is portrayed through the round of the day—evening, night, dawn, morning, full day.

35. *That abiding phantom.* He can not rid his mind of the picture of her with all the terrible details of death, burial, and the grave. He endeavors to supplant this vision by a picture of the maiden as he remembers her in happy days. Cf. l. 78.

69. *'Tis the blot upon the brain.* He realizes that the unpleasant vision of her is but the involuntary (l. 97) outcome of a diseased brain.

71. *Would the happy Spirit.* In *In Memoriam* Tennyson discusses this same problem of intercourse with the dead. Cf. XCII. and XCIII.

90. *'Tis a phantom of the mind.* The happy picture of the maiden is also an image formed by the mind, but it is made consciously and by an act of the will, and out of lovely memories. It is a good influence in his life, and will be till it fades in the reality of a heavenly reunion (ll. 104–10).

THE REVENGE

Tennyson had the first line of this poem on his desk for years. In March, 1873, he was in London and there met Mr. Markham, Secretary of the Hakluyt Society, who had collected for him some information about Sir Richard Grenville. Tennyson wrote to his wife that the

story was a tremendous one, outrivaling Agincourt. When he returned from London he read Froude's account of the famous battle ("England's Forgotten Worthies" in *Short Studies*), and he then wrote the poem "all at once in a day or two." (*Mem.* II. 142.) Tennyson's main source was Sir Walter Raleigh's *A Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of Azores* (1591). Some details were added from Froude. The account of the death came from Linschoten's *Discourse of Voyages* (1596–8). *The Revenge* was published in *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1878, and was included in *The Ballads* of 1880.

Tennyson read this poem to Carlyle, who exclaimed: "Eh! Alfred, you have got the grip of it," and Tennyson's response was, "There's a man for you. The Spaniards declared he would 'carouse' three or four glasses of wine and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them to pieces and swallow them down." (*Mem.* II. 234.)

Sir Richard Grenville was a British naval hero, a cousin of Sir Walter Raleigh. In 1585 he was commander of a fleet that went out to colonize Virginia. In 1591 Lord Thomas Howard conducted a small fleet of ships to intercept the Spanish treasure-ships returning from the West Indies. Grenville was Vice-Admiral and in command of "The Revenge." Off Azores the Spaniards with a fleet of fifty-three ships came suddenly upon the English. Sir Thomas Howard escaped with five of the six queen's ships, but Grenville was delayed by his determination to bring his sick on board. He finally attempted to escape by passing through the Spanish fleet, but his ship was becalmed, and he was attacked by about fifteen of the largest vessels. Then followed the famous battle. It lasted fifteen hours, and Grenville surrendered only when all but twenty of his men were killed. He was wounded in the battle, and died a few days later.

1. *Flores.* The westernmost of the Azores Islands. In this poem the names are pronounced Florès and Azorès.

2. *And a pinnace.* A warning was sent to Howard by the Earl of Cumberland, who was coasting along Portugal.

17. *Bideford.* Three syllables. In line 30 "Seville" has the accent on the first syllable.

40. *Mountain-like San Philip.* "The great *San Philip* being in the winde of him, and comming towards him, becalmed his sailes in such sort, as the shippe could neither way nor feele the helme: so huge and high carged was the Spanish ship, being of a thousand and flue hundreth tuns." (Raleigh.)

71–73. Froude describes the ship as settling slowly in the sea "the vast fleet of the Spaniards lying round her, like dogs around a dying lion, and wary of approaching him in his last agony."

76–90. Nearly every detail in these lines is from Raleigh.

101–103. "His exact words were: 'Here die I Richard Grenfield, with a joyous and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true

soldier ought to do, that have fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyful departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that has done his duty as he was bound to do.' When he had finished these or such other like words, he gave up the Ghost with a great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any true sign of heaviness in him." This is Linschoten's account. (*Mem.* II. 252.)

THE ANCIENT SAGE

This poem was written, Tennyson says, after reading the life and maxims of the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tsze, but does not embody his philosophy. (*Mem.* II. 476.) Tennyson adopted the framework of the story from the account of Lao-Tsze, but the subject-matter and the opinions are modern and Tennyson's own. The poem is even more definitely an expression of personal experience and views than is *In Memoriam*. Of the two characters in the poem, the Ancient Sage represents Tennyson himself. The younger poet represents the voice of the materialist or agnostic, and it is the business of the Sage to confute his negative or destructive and pessimistic view of life.

19–30. The materialist refuses to believe in anything beyond what he has seen. He has not seen the nameless Power supposed to rule the world, therefore the existence of such a Power is not to be credited except by those who are "fools of fancy."

31. *The Nameless.* In *Mem.* I. 311, we read of Tennyson, "He dreaded the dogmatism of sects and rash definitions of God. 'I dare hardly name His name,' and accordingly he named Him in 'The Ancient Sage' the 'Nameless.'"

31–49. The Sage answers by affirming that the voice of God is heard in the heart, and by emphasizing the limited power of knowledge to explain any but the most superficial facts of experience.

42. *The million-millionth.* Tennyson disliked the atomic theory. He said, "Look at the mystery of a grain of sand; you can divide it forever and forever. You can not conceive anything material of which you can not conceive the half." (*Mem.* I. 319.) He used this infinite divisibility of matter as an argument against materialism. He says that this quality of matter is more mystical, more inexplicable, to him than the thought of the existence of his own soul or of God.

46–48. The boundlessness of the universe likewise speaks to him of God.

50–52. *And if the Nameless.* "If God were to withdraw Himself for one single instant from this universe, everything would vanish into nothingness." (*Mem.* I. 319.)

57–77. The argument in this passage is in lines 66–9. Note the device of iteration by which the statement that the most impor-

tant things are not susceptible of exact proof is driven home; then the same device is used to assemble the illustrations by which the optimistic and constructive qualities of faith are emphasized.

78–81. The poet argues that the defects in the world prove it not to have been made by a God.

82–90. The Sage answers that this very imperfection, this half-deed, is but the prophecy of a future perfection. Cf. Browning's "On earth the broken arcs, in Heaven the perfect whole."

91. *The Years.* The lines of the poet's song to 153 refuse to recognize any ruling Power except Time, the power that conducts the human being from the ignorance and joy of youth through the force and wisdom of middle life, to the feeble forgetfulness of age, and finally to "Ancient Night."

99. *The days and hours.* In substance the Sage answers that eternal existence can not be fairly judged by the brief portion of it known to us here. Of the real and eternal existence the present life is but a passing shadow. "God," says Tennyson, "sees present, past, and future as one." (*Mem.* I. 322.)

155–170. Of these lines Tyndall wrote, "My judgment may seem extravagant, but I do not think the English language has ever before been wrought into music equal to that of the lover's threnody.' (*Mem.* II. 477.)

171–182. *Dark with griefs and graves.* The Sage admits the unhappiness on the earth, but he believes it to be the result of incomplete vision. "The Finite can by no means grasp the Infinite . . he had a profound trust that when all is seen face to face all will be seen as best." (*Mem.* I. 316.)

175. *For wert thou.* Mr Locker-Lampson reports a conversation in which Tennyson, in illustration of mistakes resulting from limited power of perception, said that if we had been born with but one sense instead of five our understanding of nature would have been very different, that to the limited mental vision of worms and oysters the world must seem very small indeed, but that beings of five hundred senses instead of five would be very far in advance of what we can possibly conceive. (*Mem.* II. 68.)

179–182. With death shall come the revelation that we have had a "misshaping vision of the Powers behind the world" and that the world is "wholly fair."

183–190. The conclusion of the matter in the mind of the materialist is that neither joy nor grief can be of any moment, since death ends all.

191–194. This passage seems to give a pantheistic view of future existence. In *In Memoriam*, XLVII., the belief that the self should "remerge in the general Soul" was called a "faith as vague as all unsweet" and there was insistence on separate personal consciousness

after death. "I shall know him when we meet," Tennyson says of Arthur Hallam.

199–209. The Sage asserts that death is but the entrance to a higher life.

204. *The black negation.* Tennyson, in commenting on the death of his mother ("the departure of so blessed a being"), said, "We all of us hate the pompous funeral we have to join in, black plumes, black coaches, and nonsense. We should like all to go in white and gold rather, but convention is against us." (*Mem.* II. 18.)

212–213. The voice of the skeptic against immortality is overborne by the universal instinct in its favor.

216. *Yesterday.* "To-day" means this life: "yesterday" is a life before this life. For the doctrine of prenatal existence cf. *The Two Voices*, ll. 379–84:

> "Moreover, something is or seems,
> That touches me with mystic gleams,
> Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—
> Of something felt, like something here;
> Of something done, I know not where;
> Such as no language may declare."

See also Lowell's *In the Twilight*,

> 'Sometimes a breath floats by me,
> An odor from Dreamland sent,
> That makes the ghost seem nigh me
> Of a splendour that came and went,
> Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
> In what diviner sphere," etc.

Cf. Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Bk. I, ll. 9-14, Vaughan's *Retreat*, and Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*.

219. *The Passion of the Past.* "The passages about 'Faith' and the 'Passion of the Past' were more especially my own personal feelings. This 'Passion of the Past' I used to feel when a boy." (*Mem.* II. 319.) Cf. note on "*Tears, Idle Tears.*"

229–239. When Tyndall first visited Farringford Tennyson spoke of the wonderful state of consciousness superinduced by thinking of his own name, "the apparent isolation of the spirit from the body with absolute clearness of mind," and the poet then used this experience as an argument against materialism and for personal immortality. (*Mem.* II. 473. Cf. also *Mem.* I. 320.)

249. Up to this point the arguments of the Sage for belief in God and immortality have been based on the voice of God in the heart, memories of a life before this life, and moments of experience in which there is mystical union between the human and the divine.

258. *Let be thy wail.* Perhaps no one can absolutely know the secrets of the future life, but certainly this life offers opportunities of practical goodness.

278. An evil life is a cloud between the soul of man and a knowl-

edge of God, but to the soul climbing towards the highest, full knowledge may finally come.

FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE

In 1880 Tennyson and his son made a tour in Italy. "Over Sirmio, the peninsula of Catullus, we roamed all day. My father liked this, I think, the best of anything we had seen on our tour. . . . Here he made his 'Frater Ave atque Vale.'" (*Mem.* II. 247.) The row from Desenzano and the associations of Sirmione with Catullus gave Tennyson especial delight, because Catullus was one of his favorite poets. "I love Catullus for his perfection of form and for his tenderness." (*Mem.* I. 266.) Cf. also a letter to Gladstone: "Nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell, 'Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.'" (*Mem.* II. 239.)

Note that the verse has eight stresses to a line, and that the nine lines rhyme together.

1. *Sirmione.* A peninsula ("all but island") in the Lago de Garda. The villa of Catullus was formerly at the end of it. "O venusta Sirmio," is a quotation from Catullus. "Venusta" means "lovely."

5. "*Ave atque vale.*" Hail and farewell. Also quoted from the poem of Catullus to his brother.

8. *Lydian laughter.* Cf. Catullus, "*O Lydiae lacus undae. Ridete.*"

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

In the Preface to the *Memoir* Hallam Tennyson writes thus of his father: "For those who cared to know about his literary history he wrote 'Merlin and the Gleam.' From his boyhood he had felt the magic of Merlin—that spirit of poetry—which bade him know his power and follow throughout his work a pure and high ideal with a simple and single devotedness and a desire to ennoble the life of the world, and which helped him through doubts and difficulties to endure 'as seeing Him who is invisible.'" A detailed biographical explanation of the poem follows. Stanza II. describes Tennyson's early poetry. The "croak of the raven" is the hostility of the early reviewers. The inward voice told him not to be disheartened, and "by the delight in his own romantic fancy and by the harmonies of nature . . . the inspiration of the poet was renewed." Stanza V. describes the period of the Eclogues and English Idylls. Stanza VI., describing *The Idylls of the King*, precedes the one on *In Memoriam*, because the plan of the *Idylls* had been conceived before Hallam's death. In the remaining stanzas are recorded the experiences detailed in *In Memoriam*, and finally we have the aged poet's calm prevision of death and his urgent call to the "young mariner" to follow the highest ideals of life.

The underlying idea of this autobiographic allegory is frequent in Tennyson's poems. The irregular, archaic form of the verse should be noted, in consonance with which is the use of "learn'd" (formerly in good use for "taught"), and "can" in an obsolete form, meaning "to be able to do."

FAR-FAR-AWAY

The words in this title had always a strange charm for Tennyson (*Mem.* I. 11). The poem was written before August, 1888, for Hallam Tennyson, in describing a walk with his father in that month, says, "Leaning over a gate and looking over the woods, he repeated his 'Vastness' and 'Far-far-away' without hesitating for a moment." (*Mem.* II. 346.) It was published in *Demeter and Other Poems*, December, 1889.

1–2. Cf. note introductory to "*Tears, Idle Tears.*"

3. For beautiful use of these words see *The Ancient Sage*, ll. 225–226.

5. *Evening bells.* "Distant bells always charmed him with their 'lin-lan-lone,' and, when heard over the sea or a lake, he was never tired of listening to them." (*Mem.* II. 366.)

11. *Some fair dawn.* I.e., life after death.

THE THROSTLE

In 1888–9 Tennyson had a severe attack of rheumatism. "Throughout the winter he fed the thrushes and other birds as usual out of his window. Towards the end of this month [February] he sat in his kitchen-garden summer-house, listening attentively to the different notes of the thrush, and finishing his song of 'The Throstle,' which had been begun in the same garden [Farringford] years ago." (*Mem.* II. 353.) It was printed in *The New York World* on September 29, and in *The New Review* in October of 1889.

The thrush as a prophet of summer has been often celebrated. Cf. especially the very beautiful lines in Robert Browning's *Home Thoughts from Abroad*. It is a description of an English April and May. The last lines are:

> "Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
> Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
> Blossoms and dew-drops—at the bent spray's edge—
> That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first fine careless rapture."

CROSSING THE BAR

" 'Crossing the Bar' was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out.

"I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It

came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as 'That Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us.'

"A few days before my father's death he said to me: 'Mind you put "Crossing the Bar" at the end of all editions of my Poems.'" (*Mem.* II. 366–7.)

"My father considered Edmund Lushington's translation into Greek of 'Crossing the Bar' one of the finest translations he had ever read." (*Mem.* II. 367, where translation is given.)

7. *When that which drew.* Cf. *Epilogue* (stanza 31) of *In Memoriam*,

"A soul shall draw from out the vast," etc.

Also *Coming of Arthur*, l. 410,

"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Also *The Ancient Sage*, ll. 191–4.